CHARACTER PROFILE

（キャラクター・プロフィール）

YUUTO SAKAEGUCHI

1 NA
2 BI
3 B
4 HE
5 PO
6 THR
7 SCHO
FRESH
8 FAMILY
OLDER S
MOTHER

FUMIKI MIZUTANI

1 NAME: MIZUTANI FUMIKI
2. BIRTHDAY: 1/4
3. BLOOD TYPE: B
4. HEIGHT/WEIGHT:
172CM/57KG
5. POSITION: OUTFIELD
6. THROWS/BATS: RIGHT
7. SCHOOL YEAR AND GROUP:
FRESHMAN GROUP 7
8. FAMILY STRUCTURE:
FATHER, FATHER, MOTHER,
OLDER SISTER

FOOKIKU FURIKABUTTE

Vol.2

ひぐちアサ

HIGUCHI ASA

AFTERNOON KC

アフタヌーン
KC353

おおきく振りかぶって ②

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With a new scientific explanation of the sport of baseball, as well as an unprecedented passionate emotion, here's a high school baseball manga that guarantees interest!

Even if he was laughed at and hated, he didn't yield the mound...

Everyone loved baseball, so a quarrel arose.

Settle the middle school times with the baseball match!

CHARACTER PROFILE

SHUUGO KANOU

1 NAME SHUUGO KANOU
2. BIRTHDAY 7/12
3. BLOOD TYPE B
4. HEIGHT/WEIGHT
169CM/61KG
5. POSITION: PITCHER
6. THROWS/BATS: RIGHT
7. SCHOOL YEAR AND GROUP:
FRESHMAN VINES GROUP
8. FAMILY STRUCTURE:
FATHER, MOTHER, YOUNGER
BROTHER, GRANDMOTHER

ATSUSHI HATAKE

HIROYUKI ODA

1 NAME HIROYUKI ODA
2. BIRTHDAY 2/21
3. BLOOD TYPE O
4. HEIGHT/WEIGHT
184CM/80KG
5. POSITION: FIRST BASE
6. THROWS/BATS: RIGHT
7. SCHOOL YEAR AND
GROUP: FRESHMAN VINES
GROUP
8. FAMILY STRUCTURE
MOTHER, YOUNGER SISTER

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Vol.2

SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS VOLUME

In spring, the new baseball team at Sakitama prefectural Nishiura High started utterly chaotically. The pitcher, Mihashi Ren, was made the ace through a favor for his three years in middle school, and, because he felt guilty about making his team lose consecutively, he lost all confidence in himself. To let Mihashi conquer his trauma, the coach, Momoe, set up a practice game with Mihashi's former team, Mihoshi Academy. On the day of the game, the catcher, Abe Takaya, recognized Mihashi's extraordinary efforts and encouraged him, petitioning his teammates with "I want to win this game for Mihashi." As the team proceeded with the game aiming to win, what started as a gathering of individual people calling themselves the Nishiura High Baseball Team gradually became a team.

From this year on, we'll be using hard balls
I graduated when we were still using softballs. I'll be directing you I'm Momoe!
They'll probably...
...cut me...
...after the...
...first pitch...
walks

We will!
I want ...
GRAB
... to win!
ON THE OTHER HAND, OF THE MIHOSHI ACADEMY BASEBALL TEAM, WHICH WAS AIMING FOR AN EASY WIN AGAINST MIHASHI, ONLY THE PITCHER KANOU SHUUGO WAS SERIOUS!
Let me...
...win this game against Mihashi!

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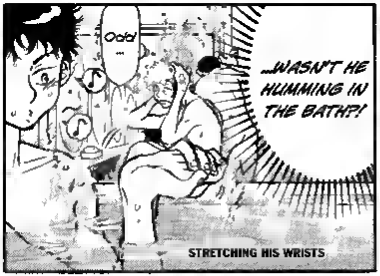
G.W. TRAINING CAMP
AFTER DOING THE LAUNDRY...
FLAP
← THE TRAINING CAMP IS ABOVE
GOING SHOPPING...
PANT PANT
AND PERFORMING ALL SORTS OF VARIOUS JOBS...
We finished preparing the beverages!
Why don't we get a break?
Let's rest!
Hey!
THAT'S SEXUAL HARASSMENT!
Where do you want your pants shine-ed?
THUD
THE ONES WHO HAVE GROWN THE CLOSEST DURING THE TRAINING CAMP...
...JUST MIGHT BE THESE TWO

LET ME...
...WIN AGAINST MIHASHI!

No, wait a sec- ond...
PAP
Yesterday, Kanou

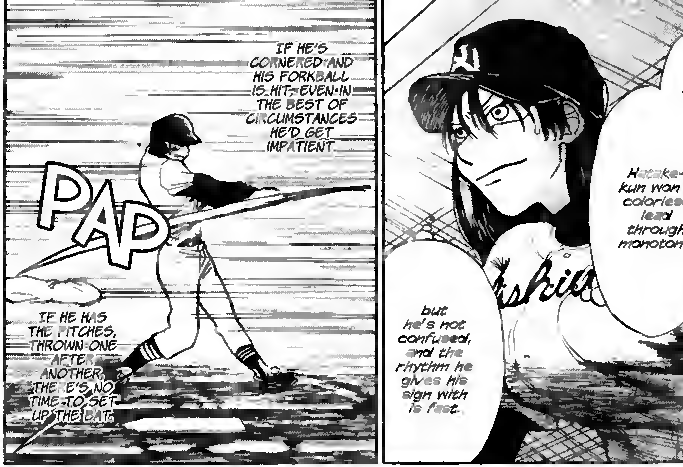
I was surprised!
He got serious all of a sudden


...WASN'T HE HUMMING IN THE BATH?!
odd...
STRETCHING HIS WRISTS

That's right and after leaving the bath, he went out for a run
And today, didn't he purposely throw the forkball before the game to show it to them?

THAT SERIOUSNESS WASN'T ALL OF A SUDDEN.
KANOU'S ALWAYS BEEN ON THE EDGE!
CHAPTER 4 FIRST RUN

I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT KANOU'S THINKING ABOUT NOT LOSING TO MIHASHI.
I'M—DYIN
AND GETTING FREAKISHLY OBSESSED WITH IT.
There'll probably be no more chances ...
...to throw against Mihashi
SWOOSH
PHEW
KANOU HAS TO WIN TODAY NO MATTER WHAT!
Two out!


Hmm,
Hatake-kun won - colorless lead through monotony,
but he's not confused, and the rhythm he gives his sign with is fast.
IF HE'S CORNERED AND HIS FORKBALL IS HIT EVEN IN THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES HE'D GET IMPATIENT
PAP
IF HE HAS THE PITCHES, THROWN ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THERE'S NO TIME TO SET UP THE BAT.

As long as he doesn't use the forkball...
SLATTER

You can throw when you're on the mound.
but when you're in the batter's box, be a batter!
NOD
STRIKE!
NOD

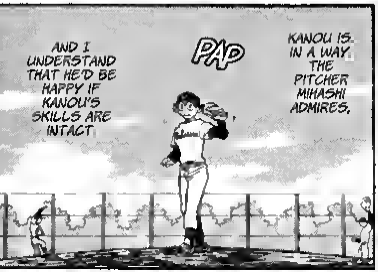
HMMM HMM
HMMM HMM

Striking out isn't something to be happy about!
BABUMP

Jeez

I-
I-
I wasn't
tri-

...You wouldn't happen to be thinking
I-
that you couldn't hit them because they're Kanou-kun's balls, would you?


AND I UNDERSTAND THAT HE'D BE HAPPY IF KANOU'S SKILLS ARE INTACT.
PAP
KANOU IS, IN A WAY, THE PITCHER MIHASHI ADMIRES.

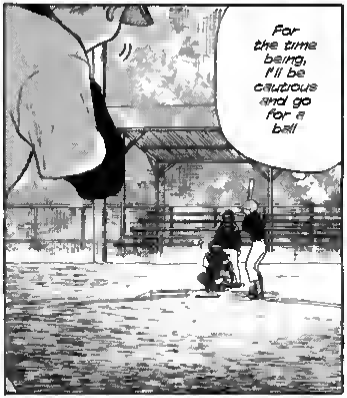
First
Nice
Nice
OUT!

CLINK
BUT...

Leave it to me!
OK, OK!
BOUNCE

WHOOSH
BATTING NINTH PITCHER
KANOU KUN

But
Is that all?


For the time being, I'll be cautious and go for a ball

I-
It's Kanou
ka-lump
ka-lump
kun!

It's because the pitcher is at the bottom of the rotation
Kanou's a flowing type

Outside
...
straight

Miss!
FWOOSH
Whistle
PLINK!

Is his batting less refined than his pitching?
Even if he'll more or less miss, he doesn't care and bats, anyway
Oh?
FOOT
!
stretching upward...
twice
swinging the bat once
Knocking off the dirt on the spikes with his bat.
clack
clack

He repeated the same actions he did when he first entered the batter's box
This isn't a habit.

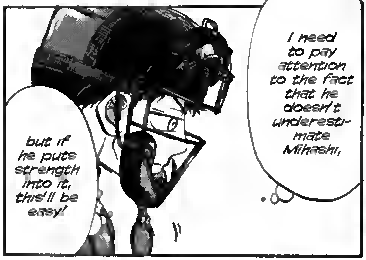
and he sets!
PERFECT

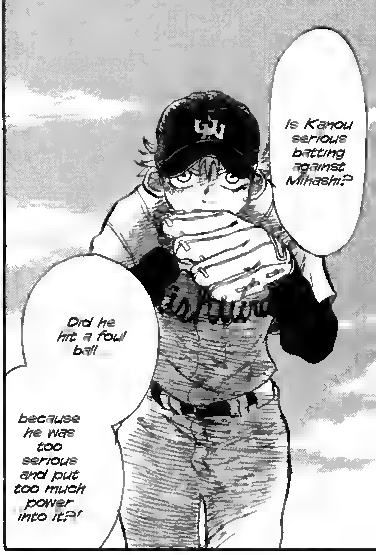
It's
a jinx!

One jinx for one time up at bat is good,

BUT ONCE HE LEAVES THE BOX HE WON'T FEEL SATISFIED UNLESS HE DOES IT AGAIN!
I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT HE'D BE THIS ROUGH

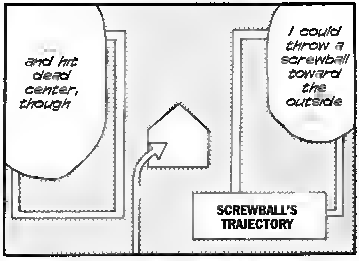
His gaze
hasn't shifted from Minashi.


I need to pay attention to the fact that he doesn't underestimate Mihashi,
but if he puts strength into it, this'll be easy!


Is Kanou serious batting against Mihashi?
Did he hit a foul ball
because he was too serious and put too much power into it?

Same place,
screw-ball

WHOOOOSH
Same place


I could throw a screwball toward the outside
and hit dead center, though
SCREWBALL'S TRAJECTORY

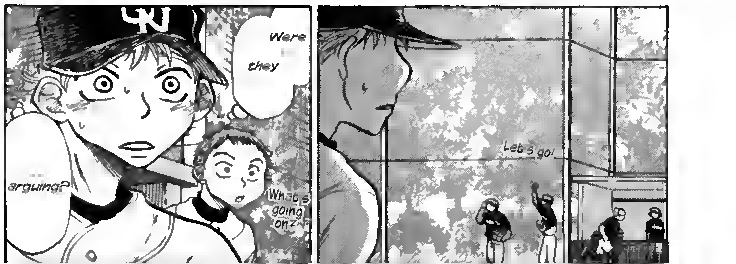
but, it's all right
Abe-kun has a plan!

SWEEE...
ECLIZ
screw-ball!
STEP
That's Mihashi for you.
It's like it's on the same course.
But I won't hit another foul!
rustle
TURN
He's adjusted himself more toward the outside.
Good.
Ah!

THUNK
MIHOSHI
THE TRAJECTORY...!
TAKE THIS!
FWEEEE
KAY!
PA
DIVE

Ö-
OUT!
DAP
K'anou-kun...!
K'anou!
Poosh
Ks-

You're the one who should be more serious!
WhatsP!
NIHOSHI
It would be stupid if you were injured!
Don't slide head-first in a practice game!
CRUNCH
Ah
Uh
We still have no hits!
Stupid ?
pat
pat
We don't need three people at first base
Hurry and go field your own positions!
NIHOSHI

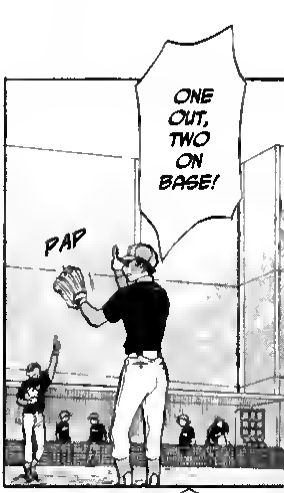

Were they arguing?
What's going on?
Let's go!

"Phew"
MIYOSHI
PLAY BALL!
BALL!
RUSTLE RUSTLE
Your first slide was effective
RUSTLE
right here
Nice delivery!
Nice delivery!
He missed his first pitch!

BALL!
"Wait," huh?
SQUEAK
Haa
PAP
Ugh!
WHOOSH
Usually K-sinou would just let Hatsike's words slide over,
without blowing off any steam
Oh, boy, it's 'cause he's way too tense
He's doing it again and again!
BALL THREE!

Don't destroy yourself!
BALL FOUR!
NICE WALK!
Here it comes, here it comes!
Abe-kun's experienced at playing with a hard ball!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
There's no worry he'd be scared of the ball!
Go ahead and clear the bases!
RUSTLE
BANG
YES! NICE BUNT!

BATTING CLEAN-UP THIRD BASEMAN TAJIMA.
ALL RIGHT!


ONE OUT, TWO ON BASE!
PAP

The forkball doesn't work against him
We should just walk him, since there's an open base

WHOOSH
LEFT CENTER!
GO IN MORE!

I've already hit the forkball, so it's OK
GRIP

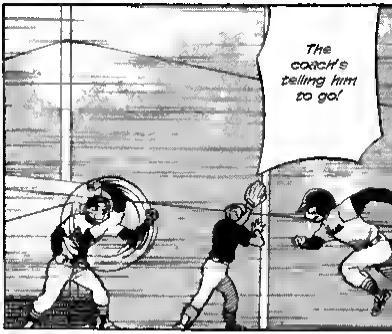
Hee...
RUSTLE

GAZE
Before, I only hit it because I stepped forward
SPOTTED
It's open over there
DAN
CLINK

WHOO
MIHOSHI
OOSH

Where are the base runners?!
FLIP
He pulled one this time!

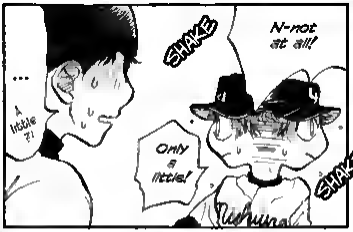
HIT THE RELAY!
BACK HOME!


The coach's telling him to go!

FWEEEE EEEEE
FWEEE
UGH!
YEAH!
SAFE!
SLIDE
PAP
WE GOT IT!

JUMP
You're not sympathizing with Kanou, are you?
Hey,
Nice hitting!
READY, SET,

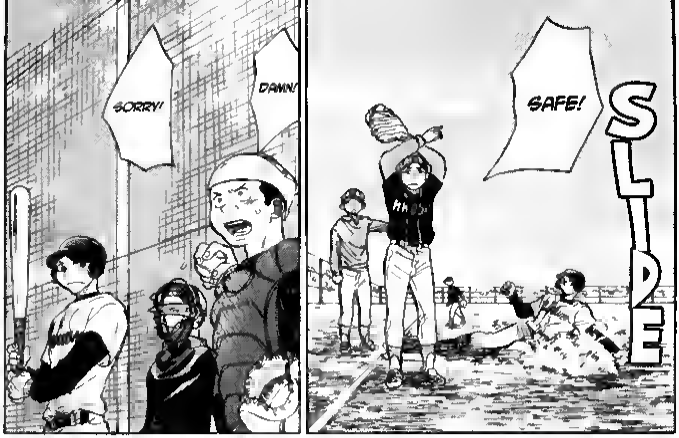
FIFTH IN THE LINEUP. CENTERFIELDER... HANAI
It's only the second inning, two men on, no one out. This is getting dangerous
Let's drive them off with a forkball before we get cornered!
OK!


...
A little ?!
SHAKE
N-not at all!
Only a little!
SHAKE

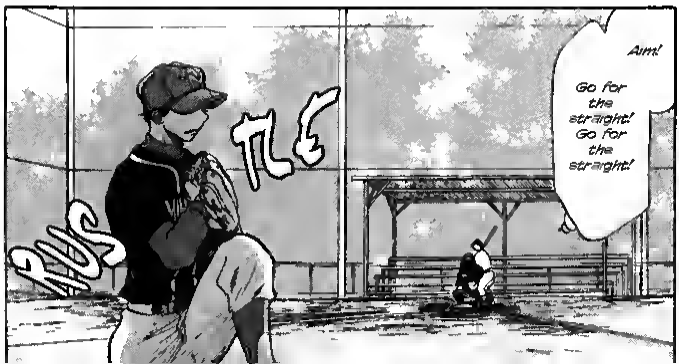
He's

RUSTLE

THROW
A fork-ball?!
Huh?
...
SWISH
Who
OOSH
Augh
...
I can't follow it!
BOUNCE
HE FUMBLED THE BALL!
GO!
TA-JIMA!


SORRY!
DAMN!
SAFE!
SLIDE

Aim for it!
There's a runner on third, and after that last error,
there won't be any more fork-balls!


Aim!
Go for the straight! Go for the straight!
ザッ
ザッ

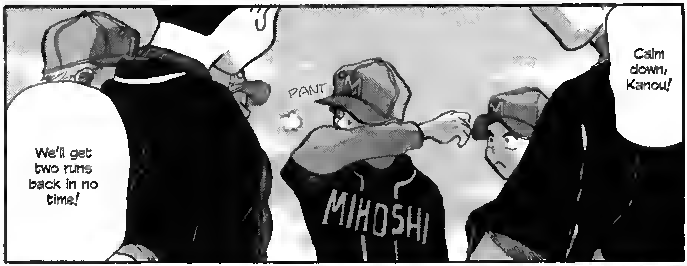
ACK
CL
Go for the straight!!
HE HIT IT!
It rose! How's the flying distance?!
More than enough!
GO!
TAP
dash

TAJIMA! DON'T SLIDE!
HE'S FAST!
RUSH

JUST WATCH ME!
JUMP
Catch

rustle rustle
There's no saving the pitcher!
The color of Kimou-kun's face changed.
TWO OUT! TWO OUT!
pant
YOSHI
SQUEAK
Yes.
A- again!
BAT
BUMP
He threw four consecutive balls!
SLIDE
BALL!
BALL!
BANG
BALL!
BANG
BALL! FOUR BALLS!
BANG

INFIELD!
Rustle
TIME!


Calm down, Kanou!
PANT
We'll get two runs back in no time!
MIHOSHI

How many times do I have to tell you?
The opponent is Mihoshi!
Stop that already!
Mihoshi's a good pitcher!

They're playing perfectly ...
...against us right now.
Even Mihashi protects me...
...probably because he thinks I'm a good person.
But-
You guys don't take anyone seriously
I'm ...
...only telling the truth!
But we didn't win at all during middle school
We didn't win because of you guys!
!
No matter how many times I tell you this, you all said Mihashi was riding on the coattails of a favor,
and in the end, during the games, you were all cutting corners!

Isn't it because the strength of the catcher's great.
Hatake?!
It'd be strange if we'd won in those circumstances!
The reason Mihashi's showing his strength today,
only during the last part!
W-we were cutting corners
If you hadn't made a fool of Mihashi and had used him properly,
he'd have been able to pitch like he did today back during middle school!
!
The real reason we lost
is because of you!
Even though you're a real pitcher,
you always beat down on Mihashi!

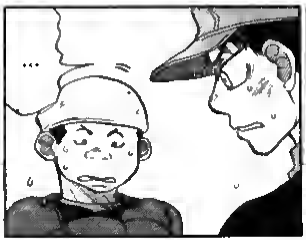
Th-th-that's right!
Mihashi was there because of a favor!
I mean, he was the only one the director addressed with an honorific!
That's going too far!
Yoshi!
Hataka was being the bad guy for you, Kanou!
MIHOSHI
STEP

Kanou, you're the only one saying that!
No! He has real strength!
And there were lots of others? Augggh! I get angry just remembering them!

Calm down, right now!
BANG
BANG
BANG

At the very least, acknowledge that much about Mihashi
That, there'd be no need to explain the situation right now.

Kanou ... I don't think it was because of a favor, either.
...!


...

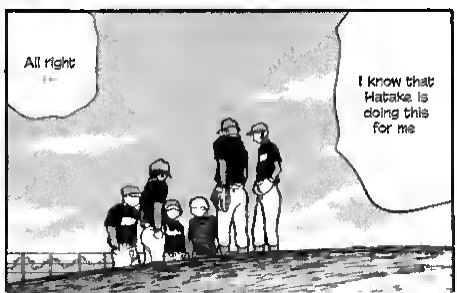
you went too far.

And also, Kanou,

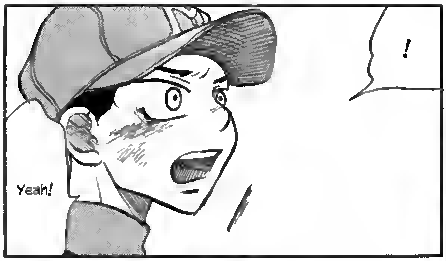
listen up!

...
No

...
Sorry


All right
I know that Hataka is doing this for me

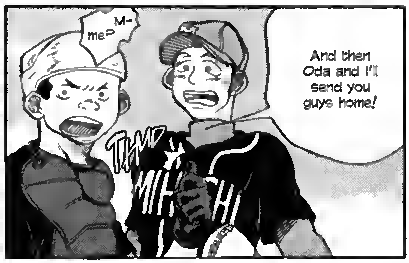
I didn't want to talk about the past
...!
Stop looking down on him...
...and start taking him seriously!
we can't win today!
I'm saying that as long as you all keep looking down on Mihashi,
If you want to make me better than Mihashi, help me win today!
You are...
...better than Mihashi!


!
Yeah!

If we win today,
that's what it means, right?!

Miya-gawa! Yoshi!
Whatever you do, make sure you get on base
Eh?!

O-
MIHOSHI
OK!


M-me?
And then Oda and I'll send you guys home!

We'll definitely turn this around..
So, don't worry about it and pitch!

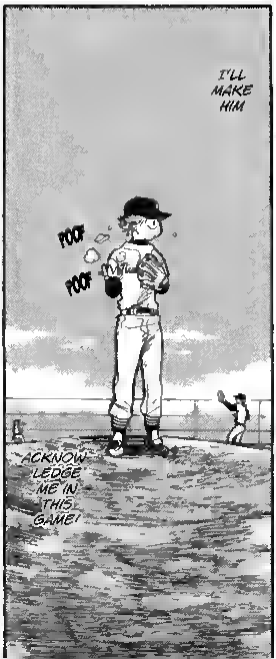
LET'S GET RILED UP AND GO!
ALL RIGHT!
FIRST, WE'LL TAKE BACK THIS INNING!
...
MIHASHI REALLY DOES
WANT TO RETURN TO HIS OLD TEAM.
surprised
You want to be part of that circle?
...It's hard under-standing him.
Wha--?!
but...
Wh-
Wh-

BUT...
I WANT A GOOD PITCHER AS WELL!
He actually wants to make up with those guys he fought with...
...and play baseball with them once more!
I UNDERSTAND THAT FEELING!
HE PROBABLY THINKS THAT'S THE BEST THING EVER!
I'LL NEVER LET YOU GO, NO MATTER WHAT!
STRIKE!
I TOOK A BIG GAMBLE ENTERING A NO-NAME PUBLIC SCHOOL LIKE THIS AND FINDING A GOOD PITCHER!
MIHASHI'S BETTER OFF WITH ME!
In order to win,
Besides

THAT'S GOOD! THAT'S GOOD!
YOU ATTACKED WELL!
Shin Clap
STRIKE OUT!
WHOOSH
Ohkura
OK.!
GO AND PROTECT OUR LEAD!
WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS FROM NOW ON
This inning, concentrate more on the batters at the top of the lineup
Y- yes!
Yes!
Ah! Abe-kun!
Sorry.
CLICK CLICK
You have to put on the gear properly!

take care of Mihashi-kun!
CLICK
OK

Oh yeah,
if there are no base runners, then I can let them reach third base without worrying
That way it'll be easier to take the offensive –
And also,


I'LL MAKE HIM
POOF
POOF
ACKNOWLEDGE ME IN THIS GAME!

TH-
SLAP
ALL RIGHT, GO!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Nishiura needs Mihashi!
That's right!

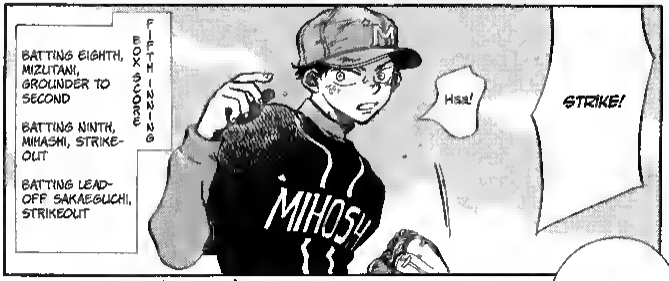
POOF
I'LL MAKE HIM CHOOSE ME!
OVER HIS FORMER TEAM-MATES!
4 ROUND 4 / FIN

P
A
Kiura

MIHOSHI

wipe

Sorry, Kanou
I didn't think I was underestimating him...
It's still too early to apologize!
Y-
yeah
clatter

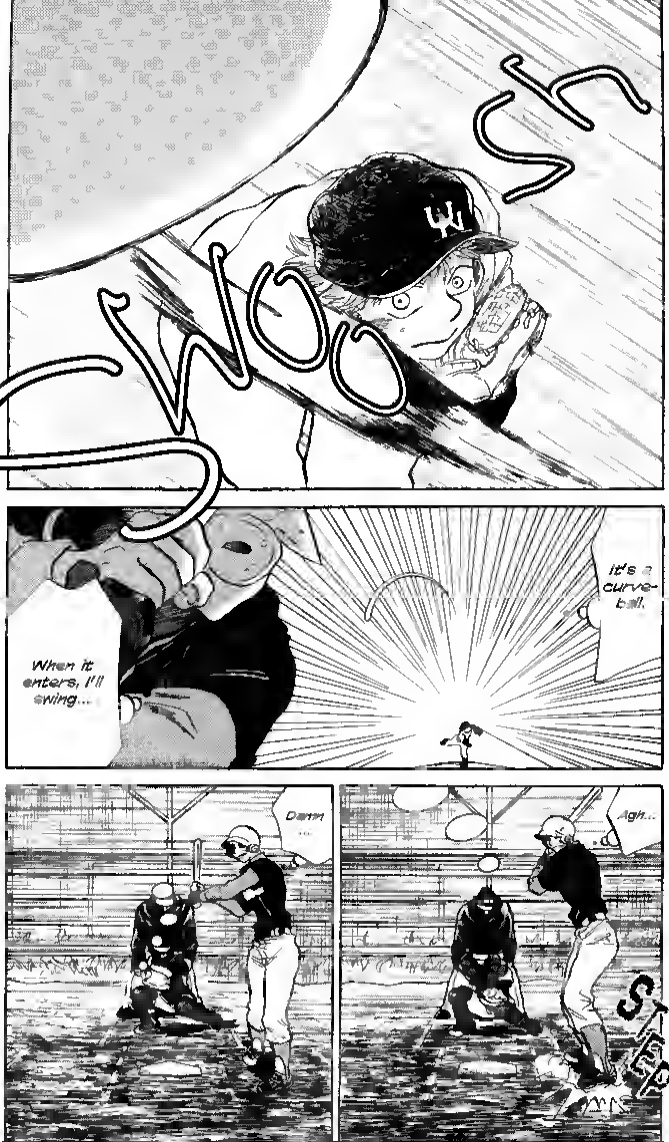

FIFTH INNING
BOX SCORE
BATTING EIGHTH, MIZUTANI, GROUNDER TO SECOND
BATTING NINTH, MIHOSHI, STRIKEOUT
BATTING LEADOFF SAKAEGUCHI, STRIKEOUT
MIHOSH
Hisa!
STRIKE!

GRIP
BOTTOM OF THE FIFTH INNING ON OFFENSIVE FOR MIHOSHI HIGH IS
Now it's our turn to score some runs
At this rate, as long as we're cautious about the clean-up batter, they won't score any runs easily
tighter
His wrist's back in shape
It seems that Kanou's venting did some good

Rustle
BATTING CLEAN UP FIRST BASEMAN ODA KUN
There are no base runners again
A clean-up hitter's called that because he brings the runners home
SHI
slider!
CLATTER
STEP
Out-
side

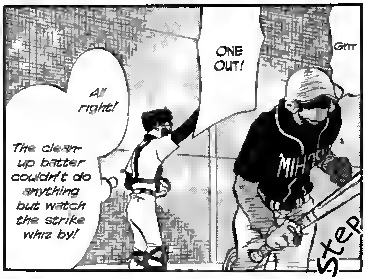
Hm,
there were no runners, so I thought we wouldn't score, so I swung too wildly
I did hit it
but, on top of the ball being abnormally slow,
Even so, it came at a good spot.
There's no way he aimed and threw it there though
Inside

rustle
FOUL!
Phew
CLATTER
The next one's the problem
Ack!
After being so close to the outside, my body couldn't follow this offensive
PAP
Will he purposely throw out of the strike zone?
Will he throw a fastball?
rustle
An off-speed pitch?
He really put me in a pinch there


SWOOSH
When it enters, I'll swing...
It's a curve-ball.
Damn...
Agh...
STEP

Ar34
Shit!
I lost when I was thinking about how I should hit it in the batter's box!
MIHASHI

PAD
STRIKE!


Grrr
ONE OUT!
All right!
The clean-up batter couldn't do anything but watch the strike whiz by!
MIHASHI
step

If you're with me, I'll let you feel that way innumerable times
tap tap
Don't forget that.

A strike where the batter is helpless is the best kind of out for the pitcher

Gasp.
DOESN'T IT FEEL GREAT!?
Nishiura

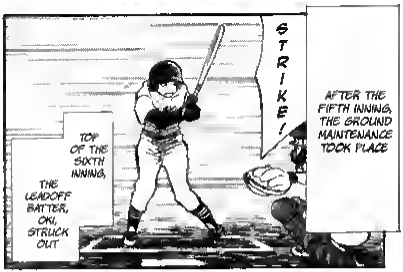
I'M THE ONE WHO WILL
DRAW OUT YOUR POWER!
Even though both teams consist of freshmen, our team is of a higher status.
Rather,
Two out!
If it weren't for the fact that the chairman's grandson was on the team, we would've just refused the game. Their rank was that low.
Clink
Sigh
Hatake's up again.
A NAMELESS PUBLIC SCHOOL.
FRESHMAN PLAYERS,
AND THE MANAGER'S
A FEMALE!

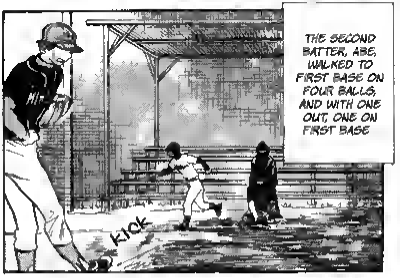
so why can't they hit one ball?
Besides, our kids should know the opposing team's pitcher really well,

SECOND BASE! GO IN! GO IN!
SINCE THE MANAGER'S ON AN AWAY GAME AND I'M ONLY FILLING IN WE HAVE TO WIN OR ELSE!

NICE, SECOND!
IF WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE CAN'T HIT IT, THEN WE CAN'T!

OK!
BATTING CLEAN UP, THIRD BASEMAN, TAJIMA KUN


STRIKE!
AFTER THE FIFTH INNING, THE GROUND MAINTENANCE TOOK PLACE
TOP OF THE SIXTH INNING, THE LEADOFF BATTER, ONI, STRUCK OUT


THE SECOND BATTER, ABE, WALKED TO FIRST BASE ON FOUR BALLS, AND WITH ONE OUT, ONE ON FIRST BASE
KICK

AN INTENTIONAL WALK?!
SHOO
nod
rustle
MIHO
They sent the runner to first base!
NOTICE
BALL FOUR!
TAKE FIRST BASE!
That's me less time up at bat.
Mishima
PAP
STEP
They've
started to get serious!

HANAI!
GO!
BATTING FIFTH, CENTER FIELDER, HANAI KUN
OK!
HIT ONE! HIT ONE!
Even though we had a base runner they gave us an intentional walk.
It's a strategy that would never have been used if they were playing by the book.
SHOW THEM!
but there's no need to mull over it.
Tajima's just that good of a batter!
There's no need to.
GRIP
he de-pressed!

RUNNERS CHANGE PLACES TWO OUTS, RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND BASE
Nishiura
AH!
PAP
RIGHT IN FRONT OF THIRD!
Ah
STEP
STEP
Damn
TWO OUT!
Uh
Thanks
Y-
yes!
I'm not Mihoshi's ally at all!
Go and bat!
So, you're fine even if Kimura-kun hits the ball?
But it looks like we can't score more runs?
Right?
H-Hanai-kun? was really close!

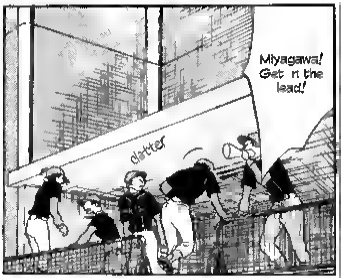
Abekum le.
mis-under-standing.
Uhh
I...
resolved to leave Mihoshi...
BECAUSE I'M ALREADY...
IT'S A MIS-UNDER-STANDING
RIGHT?
STRIKE THREE!

I'm Mihoshi's
..enemy.
I'M...

Y-
Yes, sir!
Ah!
BANG
HEY..
Hmph
I provoke him awkwardly and he gets more lethargic.
Quit zoning out and get on the mound!

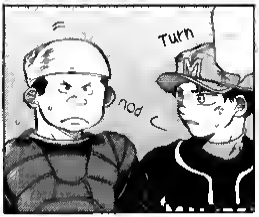
I HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ON GETTING THE END RESULT.
THERE'S NO PITCHER WHO CAN GO AGAINST THE JOY OF WINNING!

THAT'S THE WAY!
NICE PITCHING!
BOTTOM OF THE SIXTH INNING
BATTING SEVENTH, TAGUCHI, STRIKEOUT
BATTING EIGHTH, MATSUOKA, GROUNDER TO SECOND
BATTING NINTH, KANOU, GROUNDER TO PITCHER


Miyagawa! Get it the lead!
clatter

Aim for it!
Aim!
"pant"
"pant"
SWAY

TOP OF THE SEVENTH INNING
BATTING SEVENTH, IZUMI, GROUNDER TO SECOND
BATTING EIGHTH, MIZUTANI, FLY BALL TO CATCHER
BATTING NINTH, MIHASHI, STRIKE-OUT
"pant"
Yes!
SHI


Turn
nod

Kanou!
Forget about the offensive and go rest!
They say the max of your pitch count's a hundred!

gulp
gulp
gulp
SHUSH

What pitch are we at now?
A hundred
Hey Kanou

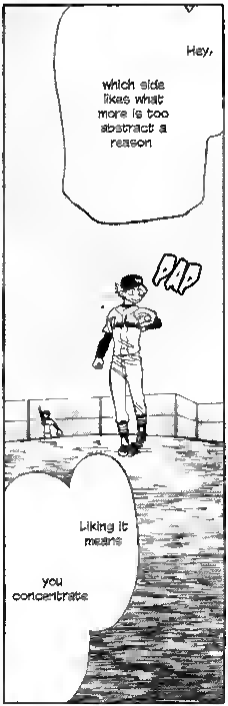
Hataka!
WHO

Just how...
did you lose to Mihashi...
It's already the seventh inning
At this rate, the next at-bat will be my last
Strike!
He didn't lose!
I don't think so, either!
But
If we cut corners, we can't hit Mihashi!
It might give me a hint
Tell me!
You mean like speed or control?
No, more
like whether he's fit to be the pitcher or not
Odai,
what do you think the conditions for being a pitcher are?
Hint...

...that I can throw for an entire game.
I love pitching so much...
I think it's
...I've never really thought about it
MIHOSHI

It was the entire summer of second year of middle school
I think

Oh, probably
So?

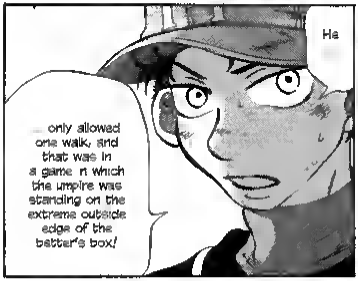

Hey,
which side likes what more is too abstract a reason
PAP
Liking it means
you concentrate

ヤハヤ
Mihashi
...never made a careless pitch...
during a game

That's
The one where you can throw a variety of pitches and control their course throughout of one game.
...not something you've made sure whether he can or can't do

Careless pitch?
HOSHI
What kind are you talking about?

I've heard from him himself.
That can't be used as proof!


He
...only allowed one walk, and that was in a game in which the umpire was standing on the extreme outside edge of the batter's box!

In the last year in middle school,
Mihashi threw zero dead balls
Wha-?!
MIHOSHI

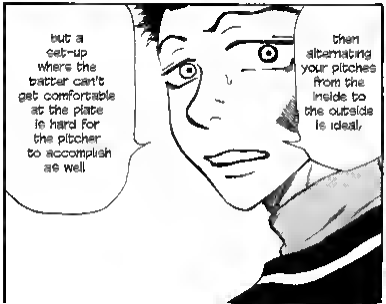
NINE?!
As for his targets,
his strike zone is divided into nine sections!

Then, you're saying
that guy's controlling his pitches so they go inside, outside, inside, outside?
No way!
He's just screwing around and getting lucky, right?!

Kainou,
that's something most pitchers dream of doing!
After throwing outside, then immediately going that far inside...

If that's true...
Control
STRIKE!

AH!
PAPAP


then alternating your pitches from the inside to the outside is ideal,
but a set-up where the batter can't get comfortable at the plate is hard for the pitcher to accomplish as well

See?!
The escalator team knows that Mihashi can do that.
Shook
WHA—?!
Is
A fastball after an off-speed pitch
Inside, then outside
that really so hard?
Well,
his personality may be part of the problem, too
However, they've never seen a pitcher besides Mihashi,
so they don't know how amazing Mihashi's precision is with his pitches
Oda!
Don't coax Kanou!
We've had this conversation many times
Sigh
The ball itself has no speed! It's just a slow ball!

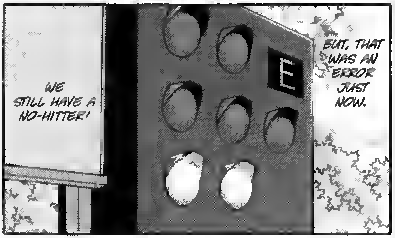
TWO OUTS!
Oda!
Y-
yes?
I've thought of a way,
but for one time only!
IF WE CAN GO THAT FAR,
THEN MIHASHI WILL ACKNOWLEDGE MY POWER, TOO
If we can get one more out, then the seventh inning will end perfectly
Let's
finish it with him!
We can ignore Kichi if we throw him a pitch outside and low.
MIHOSHI
In middle school, that'd be considered a perfect game

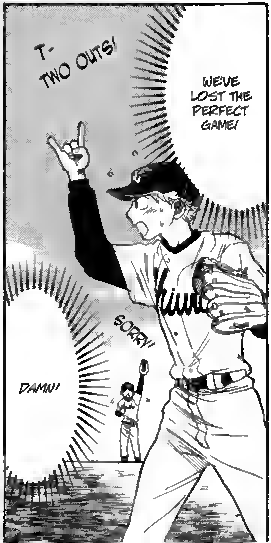
Note Middle school baseball games only last for seven innings

To the outside low...
rustle
TREMBLE TREMBLE
OK!
A fastball to outside and low corner!
Play!
There's nothing to be afraid of
Good course!
FWE
CLA
NK
WHAM
REMOV
Good! A fly ball to left!

PASS
BOUNCE
O-
OK!
OK!
WH-
Shit
BOUNCE
BOUNCE
WHAT?!

YOU,
DAMN
MI...
ZU...
TANI!
MIYOSHI
TWO OUTS, RUNNER AT FIRST BASE!
Nice hitting!


E
WE STILL HAVE A NO-HITTER!
BUT, THAT WAS AN ERROR JUST NOW.


T-
TWO OUTS!
WE'VE LOST THE PERFECT GAME!
SORRY!
DAMN!

If we can pin down Oda next,
we can get a no-hitter up to the seventh inning!

There's 1 runner!
Abe-kun,
there are runners now Do you understand?

ODA'S MIX OF PITCHES UP UNTIL NOW ARE:
INSIDE HIGH FASTBALL — STRIKE
INSIDE LOW FASTBALL — STRIKE
OUTSIDE HIGH CURVEBALL — FOUL
INSIDE LOW SCREWBALL — STRIKE
OUTSIDE SLIDER — FOUL
INSIDE SCREWBALL — FOUL
OUTSIDE CURVEBALL — STRIKE

ODA WON'T GO AFTER PITCHES THAT LEAVE THE STRIKE ZONE!
EVEN IF THEY'RE SERIOUS.
...BUT...
EVER SINCE TAJIMA'S INTENTIONAL W. IT SEEMS THEY'VE BEGUN TO GET SERIOUS.

We'll switch
A strategy that can only be used once
IF A BALL WITH NO STUFF IS THROWN EVENWHERE LIKE THAT IT IS PRETTY DIFFICULT TO HIT
HOWEVER, IF YOU KNOW WHERE THE NEXT ONE'S GOING, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO HIT IT
... between inside and outside curves during this at-bat too!
Even if I know, I can't hit it.
WHOA
HE HAS OBJECTIONS FOR THE COACH
I can't react if the afterimage of the previous ball is cut rigidly through by a diagonal...
For the first ball...
SWISH
Whoa, scary...
I close my eyes.
...make the afterimage remain, right?
Then you just have to...
MIHOSHI

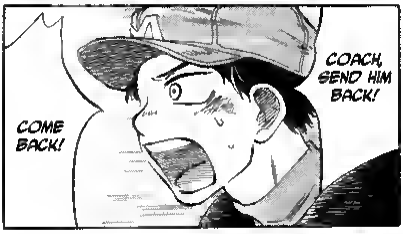
RUSTLE
Nice
WHOOSH
MIKOSHI
I swing strongly, no matter what!
And, then,
I look at the mitt before the call
STRIKE!
The mitt's outside!

REMEMBER!
That guy
Tsukiura
scratch
scratch
swung with his eyes closed just now
then the next one's inside
If his unusual control is the real thing
PAD
Other than the two pitches my first time up at bat, they've all been curve balls.
The next one's definitely a change-up, too!
Inside screw-ball!
It's a ball I've already seen twice!
Inside-!
Inside screw-ball!
Inside screw-ball.

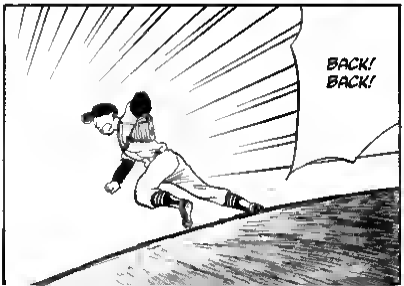
HE'LL--
HE'LL HIT IT THERE!
No!
He'll--
rustle
...if I tell them it was because of a pitcher's intuition?
Just how many catchers would consent...
THEY'RE GOING TO HATE ME!
...SHAKE MY HEAD AT ABE-KUN
AND NOW...
I HAVE TO THROW AS ABE-KUN SAYS

WHOOSH
It'll change course now!
Don't get confused!

SWEE
TURN


COACH, SEND HIM BACK!
COME BACK!

OOH!

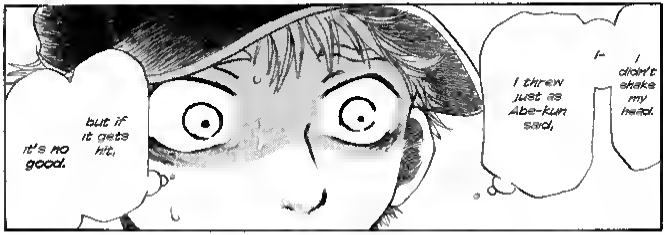

BACK! BACK!

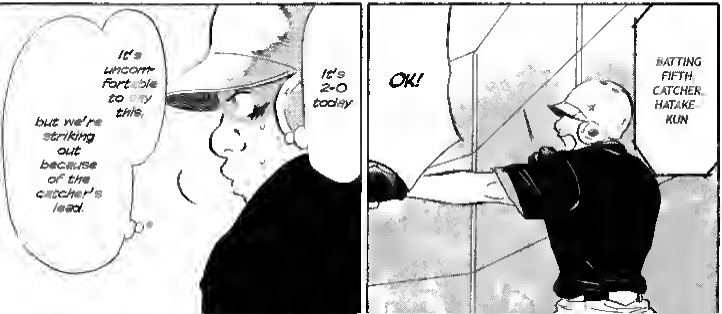
Twee
jump
bounce
rustle
RELAY TO THIRD!
ONE RUN!
step
SLIDE
PAH

A THREE-BASE HIT!
SAFE!

NICE HITTING
Good going, Oda!
The perfect game,
the no-hitter
and even the shut out
disappeared.
NO, BEFORE THAT,
WHY DID I THINK THAT I'D GET TO A OUT?
How did he hit it so cleanly?
Did I underestimate Oda's strength?

Abe-kun's
mad
DAMN IT!
I KNEW ABOUT ODA'S ABILITY TO HIT LONG BALLS!
BA-BUMP
I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT ABOUT MAKING HIM HIT SINGLES INSTEAD OF THINKING LET'S GET HIM OUT!


but if it gets hit,
it's no good.
I- I didn't shake my head.
I threw just as Abe-kun said,


It's uncomfortable to say this,
but we're striking out because of the catcher's lead.
It's 2-0 today
OK!
BATTING FIFTH CATCHER HATAKE KUN

BUT I CAN'T READ HIS LEAD.
AND AGAINST ME, THERE WON'T BE ANY LEADS FOR ALTERNATING PITCHES
BUT I WANT TO HIT IT HERE!
I WANT TO GET ANOTHER RUN NO MATTER WHAT!
MIHOSHI
No matter how good a lead we get,
there's a limit to my pitches
poomph
My body's cramped.
TWO OUTS!
If I could just read the type of pitch them I can hit it!
Can't I do
something?!
must be thinking that
Abe-kun
He's definitely getting out.
Hatake hasn't been shown anything but screwballs

rub
He'll think it's a screwball and be in for a surprise!
If we throw a fastball at waist-level,
But —
He's still giving signs.
At any rate, I have to pitch
He's rubbing the side of his middle finger with the fat of his thumb...
That's Mikashi's
...HABIT WHEN HE'S ABOUT TO THROW A FASTBALL!
Inside high
RUSTLE

ドン
ビュン

tuer

Nishi
HOME
RUN!

...YES!
NICE BATTING, HATAKE!
HOSHI

They took the lead
Wobble
Those are signs he's collapsing!
Nishi-hiro-kun!
Come here!
Y-yes!
No matter how good Abe-kun's lead is,
rustle
rustle
the one who's actually throwing is me
When facing a batter, the weaker one loses.
Because of me
the team will lose
He stood!
Nice hitting!
Clap
Hmm!

His tenacity when it comes to pitching is amazing
Mihashi-kun hasn't lost the will to pitch
BUT I HAVE TO THROW!
THIS IS A PLACE WHERE PITCHERS STAND!
More importantly Abe-kun,
It seems like it's all right
Ok
for you to be so shocked that you leave the pitcher alone
YOU'VE STILL GOT A WAYS TO GO!
Why?

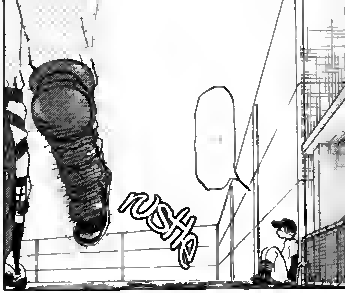
Ooh and Hatake shouldn't be able to hit those balls.
CLANK
DID I GET SOMETHING WRONG?!

Nice, right field!
"aye"
Nishino
PAD
RIGHT!
OK!
Were they just lucky with the three-base hit and the homerun?
rustle
We're just getting started!
Let's turn it around!
Mikeshi
But to swing randomly, by relying on your guts...
clatter
He didn't enter
He didn't enter the dugout.
RUSTLE
HE'S THE ONE THAT'S FEELING THE BRUNT OF THIS
Even if it was my mix of pitches that was hit
it wasn't me who was hit

I-
it's Aber kun
I have to
apologize
I
cost us an out because of my own greed
The triple and the homerun were my fault, too
Ah, I can't
I have to look u-
I'm sorry.
You threw well.
Look up.
QUICKLY

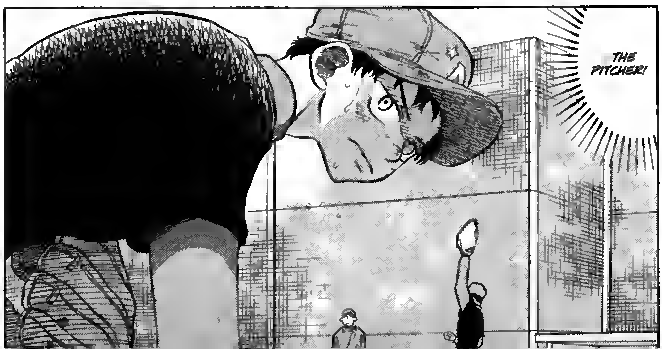
Why is that...
Abe-kun's...?
...It's because...
Nishiura
Threw well...?
you said.
I was aiming for...
...a perfect game
Wh-
why are you...
apologiz-
ing...?
Nishiura
...your face...
...was just dripping with your lingering attachment toward Mihoshi!
I wanted to win with a clear difference!
Batters 1, 2, and 3!
Yes!

What should we do so that Tajima-kun doesn't get intentionally walked?
Eh, um—
Get onto base!
Load the bases!


rush

I was.
—toward Mihoshi!

That's right!
All three of you, attack by trying to load the bases!
The target is—

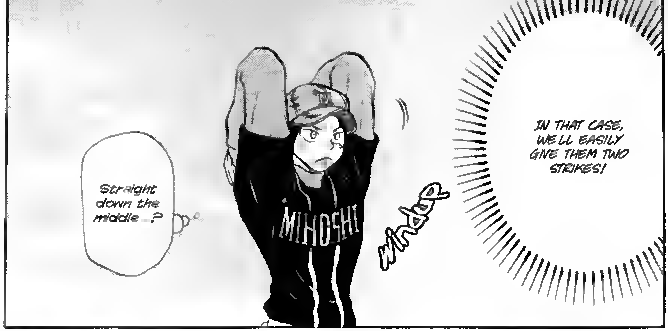

THE PITCHER!

This is batting as a team
I have to make him throw as much as possible!
BATTING LEADOFF SECOND BASEMAN SAKAEGU CHI-KUN
TOP OF THE EIGHTH INNING ON OFFENSIVE FOR NISHIURA HIGH IS...
LOOK, HE'S STOPPED THROWING WARM-UP PITCHES, TOO
BALL BACK!
KANOU-KUN WILL HAVE THROWN MORE THAN 20 PITCHES BY THIS INNING

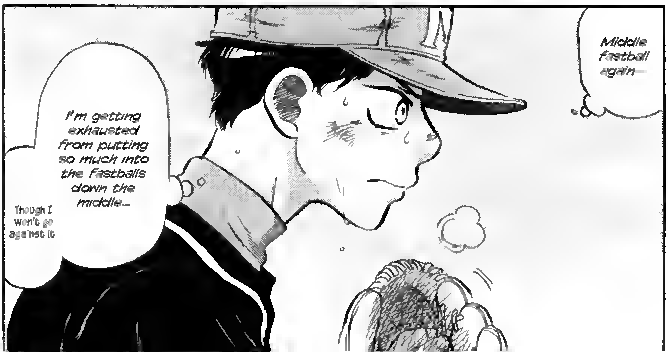
PAP
I'll take the first pitch even if it turns out to be a strike!
BALL!
OK! I got a borderline pitch called in my favor
GRIP
ISHI

We'll use forkballs starting from the second pitch.
The leadoff batter has always swung freely
We have a limit set on our pitch count!
SWISH
That was a ball!
Damn!

Turn
PAP
SHOCK
WE'LL MAKE HIM SWING AND MISS!
TURN
BALL!
Damn! He waited!
But, wait?
Ah! It couldn't be...
I see! They're predicting Kanou's physical ability won't hold out...
...and are planning to increase the pitch count as a team!
...THE MANAGER'S GIVING SIGNS TO WAIT AND INCREASE THE PITCH COUNT!


IN THAT CASE, WE'LL EASILY GIVE THEM TWO STRIKES!
middle
MIHOSHI
Straight down the middle...?

No, don't... He'll get distracted!
He's definitely trying to tire Kanou out!
TAP TAP
CLINK
Oh! Nice!


Though I won't go against it
I'm getting exhausted from putting so much into the fastballs down the middle...
Middle fastball again...

CLINK
whoosh
SAKAEGUCHI-KUN UNDERSTANDS MY DIRECTIONS REALLY WELL!
Though I don't think I can make them fly forward
but at least I can hit the middle fastballs.
He's doing pretty well!
Nice hit! Nice hit!
Kuro
If the batter swings, it will continue putting pressure on Kurou-kun
The fact that the catcher's asking for middle fastballs means there's a high possibility that the fact that we're waiting for pitches has been discovered
Finally, a forkball
IF WE SEND A FORKBALL DOWN THE SAME COURSE, HE'LL DEFINITELY MISS!
With this, it's 2-2. If the next one's a strike, he'll have no choice but to swing.
and...
He'll definitely be aiming for another foul

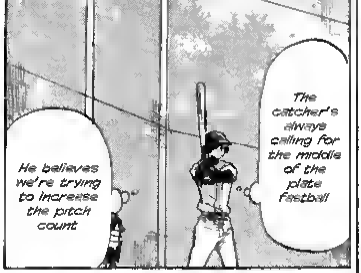
...HERE!
ぃくぉぉぉぉ
It'll end
rush
DROP
SURPRISE
H-
BALL THREE!
He saw through it!

It's 3 and 2
phew
Yes, yes!
shudder
shudder
Whoa
Thank God
I don't know what I'd do if that was a fastball!
glance
BALL! BALL FOUR!
Nice walk!
There it is!
pop

IS THROWING FROM THE MOUND THIS EXHAUSTING?
Damn it!
I can't even pretend to have the energy now
MIHOSHI
I've easily handled this many pitches in the bullpen.
MIHA-SHI-
BEEN DOING THIS EVER SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL!
Do I
went to
return to Miho-shi?
BATTING SECOND FIRST BASEMAN OKITA KUN
I won't hesitate any-more
I'll go with middle fastballs from the first pitch
Right now we're fighting against Mihoshi,
the Mihoshi I'd always dreamed of in middle school
that my middle-school team's in such a bad state
It's my fault

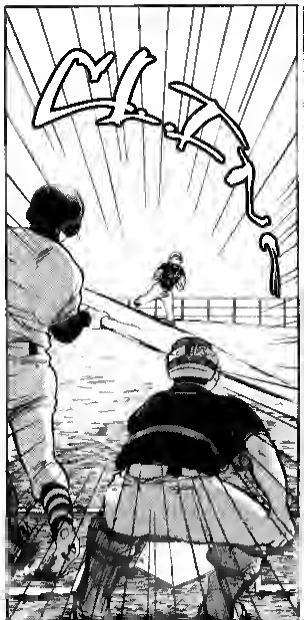
Plong
Middle fast-ball ...
MIHOSHI
A bunt!
STEP
STRIKE!
You think we'll let you go this time?!
PLACE
PA
PA
rustle

THUNK
AH!
DEAD BALL!
rustle
Stand firm.
If I can hold out for two innings, we win!
BATTING THIRD CATCHER ARE KUN.
Batting third, catcher, Abe-kun
depressed
rustle
We don't have time to be de-pressed!
It can't be helped k-kinou.
tighten


The catcher's always calling for the middle of the plate fastball
He believes we're trying to increase the pitch count

OR ELSE THE CLEAN-UP BATTER WILL BE UP WITH THE BASES LOADED!

I'll swing
with my all on the first pitch!
grip


Damn you, Hatake,
rustle
I'm telling you, I'm getting tired of these middle fastballs!
WOOSH

Note Force play : Force out With full bases the runner must advance to the next base Instead of tagging the runner a fielder can touch the base the runner is running to while holding the ball getting the runner out

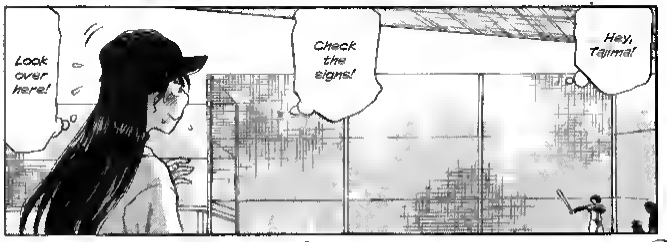
You're wearing a nut case, right?
It's a safety cup!
Wh-
Wh-?
If we can get two outs and leave the third runne-
Is echoing ↑
!!
Oh?
Can I grip it deep?
SLIDE
So he's been gripping it shallowly this whole time.
Which means that Kanou can throw forkballs that fall even further.
He didn't throw like that because he was doubtful of Hotake's catching.
What a waste...
Yeah, but the bases are loaded.

If they hit a double, they'll get three runs.
but if the outfield gets clumsy and fumbles, the game'll turn back around
It would be great if we could give them an intentional walk
...I just have to stop it, right?
I can do it, so show them!
MIHOSHI
That's true, but...
We're gonna get loosa runs!
excited
excited
HOP
click
HOP
click
GRIP
CRACK

windup
SLIDE
Let's go from the first pitch
FWEE
WHOOSH
RUSTLE
The rotation of the forkball's completely visible.

!!
DRIP
SWOOSH
Nice swing!
It fell quite a bit!
turn
Whoa!
STRIKE!

They'll throw that ball again
RUSTLE
If we let it go, will they give us a ball and increase the pitch count?
Nice stop.
SWOOSH
turn
turn

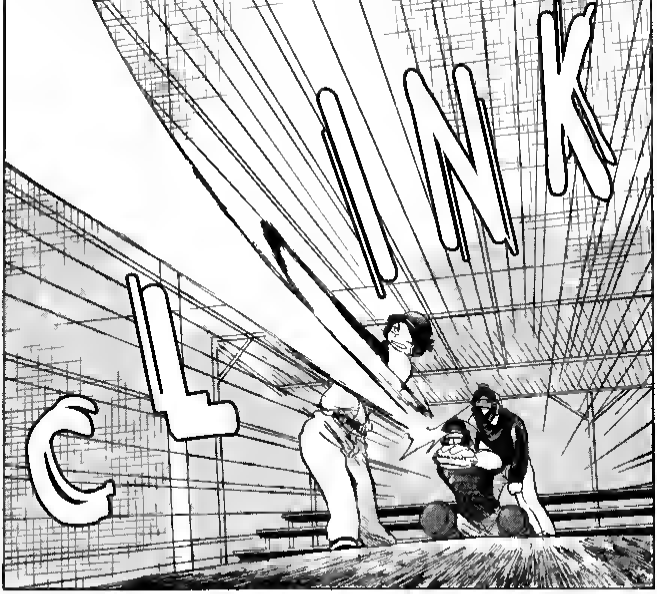

Look over here!
Check the signs!
Hey, Taima!

He's concentrating really hard
BA-BUMP
crackle
Kamou!

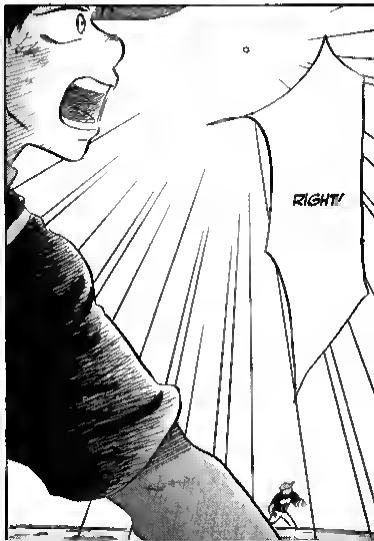
STEP
SWING
Wow
STRIKE!
He's not hitting it...
SPIN
CATCH
On the first pitch, I just swung at the course I remembered the ball traveling in.
but, this time I calculated!
FALL
THUD

MIHOSHI
TAP TAP
I'll hit it—
...this time!
TURN
RUSTLE
PISH

A CHANGEUP?!
MIHUSI
NO! HE'S SWINGING!
TURN
PLEASE! TAJIMA!
STAND FIRM!


CLINK

IT WENT PEEP!


RIGHT!

PAP
GO!
WHA-?!
Oki, go!
The second baseman's arm is weak! One more person!
DASH
TIE!
SAFE
He left third base!
Don't underestimate us!

HATAKE!!
PAH
PAP
OUT!
OUT!

Ah!
Step
Hey
...go back there
If I
Mi-hoshi is in high spirits right now
...because K'ihou-kun's throwing
Even
Step
Step
T-
Tajima-kun...?
Even though the bases were loaded with no outs,
we only got one run.
I get that we have to protect what we've got,
so let's go back to the bench together!
Though I was batting clean-up, I've let down the manager,
Eh?
but I'm still going back to the dugout
You threw with your all, right?
!
I want one more run
It'll be tough if we don't turn the game around

BATTING FIFTH, CENTER FIELDER, HANAI KUN
GET ME HOME!
They got a run, but we got a double-play at home
Hanai hit it!
Nishin
Tense
If we corner him, the flow of the game will be with us again
The normal forkball's enough for him!
rustle
Nishin
ピキ

Without a sign?!
Aber kurz
A bunt?!
clunk
With two outs, they'll be going after first base!
dash
Go!
whoo
YOSHI
FIRST BASE!
pick up

SAFE!
DASH
TWIST
"pant"
YAHOO!
WE'RE IN THE LEAD AGAIN!
MIHOSHI
Ya-
yay!

They're in the lead again...
You can't be like that on the mound
because everyone's relying on you.
Rushi
Damn it!
You can't, K'inou.
PUNCH
?! Wha...
WIPE
MIHOSHI
Hey, there.
there's nothing to cry about?
!!
I-
SURU
I'm not crying!
The sweat got into my eyes.
Wipe
We're in the middle of a game. Let's go back
How's your foot?
It's fine.
TWO OUTS!
MIHOSHI

K'mou
didn't apologize
THAT'S WHAT THE GENERAL OF THE MOUND'S SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE
Even if he's mad at himself for being weak,
losing the lead because of that isn't an excuse to his teammates.
I like that kind of pitcher
Stand firm K'mou!

It's wonderful he put so much thought into it!
And that was a great bunt! No fear for the hard ball at all
It's great we let K-mori-kun run!
Mmm!
Yushima
Yushima
Yushima

At least be depressed on the bench!
I thought it was because I dropped that Fly ball!
WHAT'S WITH THAT? JEEZ! WE WERE WORRIED!
You all right?
It's 8-8 Abe-kun said
Splash
Per
Hee!
Let's do our best for two more innings!
Hey, we have the lead now!
I'M GONNA EAT A BANANA!
BOOMP
Ah
Here!
Make sure you're hydrated!
HAVE A LINGERING ATTACHMENT TO MIHOSHI.
Stef
STRIKE THREE!
I REALLY DID...

...BUT...
...BUT...
...BUT...
Make him hit it to third!
GO EASY!
Nishimura
I made sure this time.
BOTTOM OF THE EIGHT INNING
BATTING SEVENTH, TASUCHI, GROUNDER TO SECOND
BATTING EIGHTH, MATSUOKA, FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD
PICK UP
I have to go out or else it won't come to Oda again
BATTING NINTH PITCHER, KANOU KUN
Bring me a fastball!

CLICK
RUSTLE
Fastball!
We can let them hit singles.
We just have to prevent consecutive hits.
Now Oda'll definitely come out in the ninth inning!
Good!
Nice hitting!
pull
"pant"
RUSTLE

TWO OUT, ONE ON FIRST BASE.
STRIKES OUT CONTINUING - MIYASAWA
pap
TOP OF THE NINTH INNING
IZUMI, GROUNDER TO SHORTSTOP
MIZUTANI, GROUNDER TO THIRD
MINAMI, STRIKEOUT
RUSTLE
step
I- I know I
shouldn't
shake my head at you
A- A-
Abe-kun,
We just have to not let any runners get on base before the clean-up hitter.
DO YOUR BEST!
TH- THANKS
A-
um, um, U-
What?
What is it?!

I-
I don't really know,
but he closed his eyes and swung at the first pitch—
and it was kind of strange!
I think!
I-
I won't!
Move
Whs-?!
JUMP
I won't shake my head, but
Huh?!
Why?!
the clean-up hitter would hit the ball!
Before, I thought that!
Uh?!
Ah! I said it!
I-+
Is he mad?!
Phew
!
YOU BLOCK-HEAD!
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT BEFORE ?!
AUCH!
I don't want to oppose you!
I don't?!

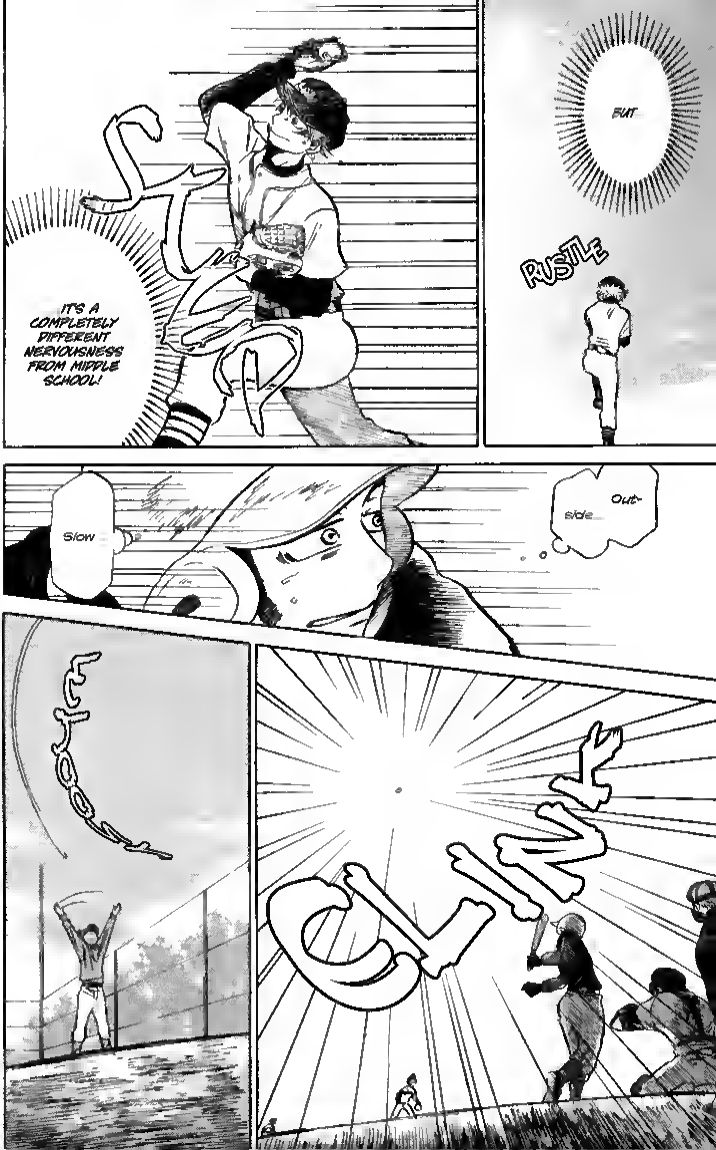
OK!
My way of thinking wasn't wrong, after all!
Then Oda wasn't shaken up.
I see
We can win this!
!!
I should have said that at the time!
Just now
Mihashi said Oda closed his eyes.
This method really couldn't be used more than once.
So, it's been discovered by the catcher
DON'T CHICKEN OUT!
This is painful, but this is as far as I can go.
The only thing left...
Mm-hmm!
...IS TO RELY ON THE PLAYERS!

OK!!
BATTING SECOND CENTER FIELDER HIIRAGI KUN
click
Bottom of the ninth inning. Mihoshi Academy's offensive is
I'm not scared
First!
Got it!
PAP
Argh
damn it!
I don't want to lose to Mihoshi!
I don't want to lose to Mihoshi!
Grip
clink
HOSHI

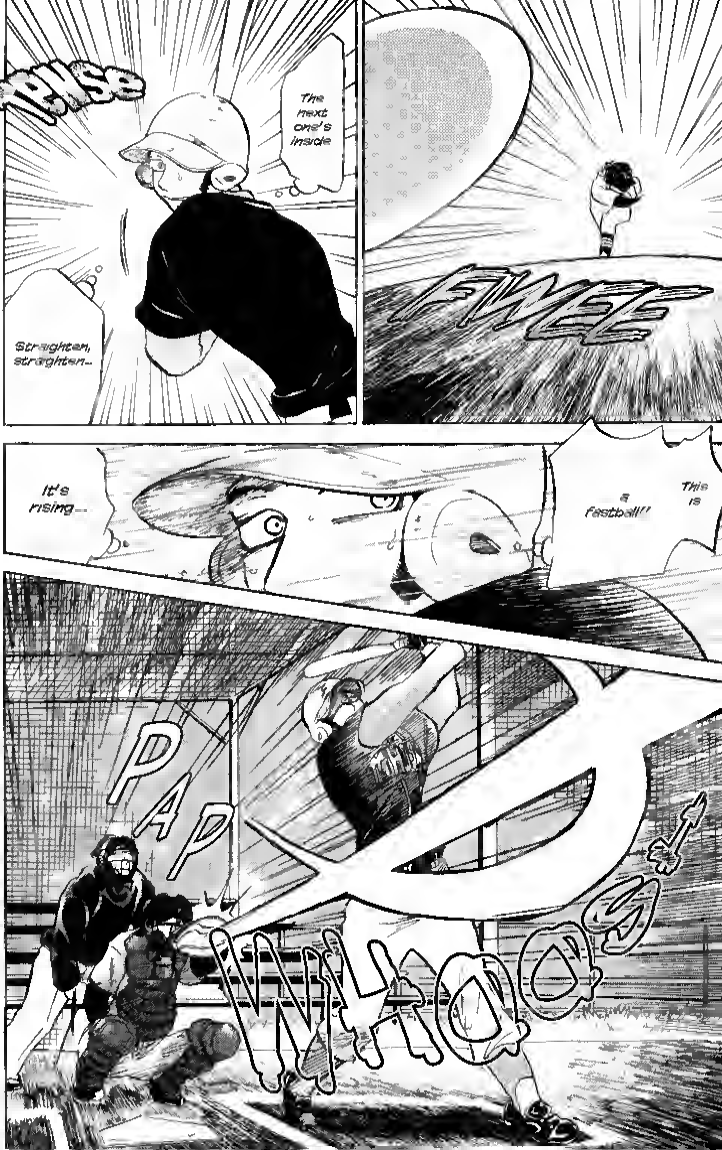
BATTING THIRD SHORTSTOP YOSHI KUN
I'll start the flow one more time!
CLINK
THAT SLOW ball!
OK!
TWO OUT!

We're counting on you Oda
ONE MORE OUT LEFT
Oda!
BATTING CLEAN UP, FIRST BASEMAN, ODA KUN
Only get it dead center.
Throw the first pitch with your all.
I'm not scared.
Even though it's the person that got a three-base hit last time.

Nish
FLASH
PAP
PAP
SHOCK
STRIKE!
It got in!
This is big!
I'm not scared
That's not it
PAP
I mean, I'm really nervous that
the ball might get hit
I forgot he had that ball speed, too.
phew
They got me there...


IT'S A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT NERVOUSNESS FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL!
BUT
RUSTLE
SLOW
OUT-SIDE...
CLINK
WOOO

It's a three-at-bat challenge
They will all be in the strike zone
Come!
CLOSE!
!
ODA!
DON'T END IT!
HERE
...I'll...
...the game from the mound
...right now, I'm enjoying


Tense
The next one's inside
Straighten, straighten...
FWEE
It's rising...
This is a fastball!!
PA
WHOOSH

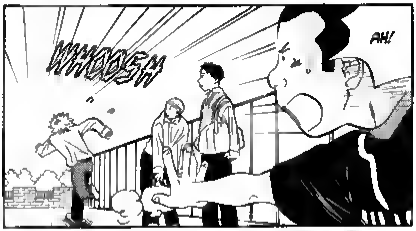
...BECOME A REAL ACE!
STRIKE!

Get your luggage! We'll be going to the gate!
Thanks
The car will be here in ten minutes

OK!
Mihashi
Ah!
JUMP

scratch scratch
scratch scratch
scratch scratch

We won
It's all right,
no matter what they say, he won't go back to Mihoshi!

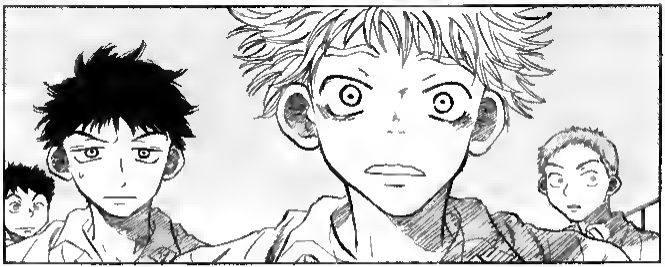

WHOOSH
Ah!

tighten
GRAB

PUSH
SENDING FORWARD
Ah
jump
PANT
SLIDE
SLIDE

BOW
It's ... my bad!
MIHOSH!
MIHOSH!
SORRY!
...com-pletely screwed up
...your m dale school years...
?!
Sorry!
Sorry!
BOW
BOW
BOW
It's our fault, too!
!!
Will you give us a chance to redeem our-selves?

...Come back...
...to us.



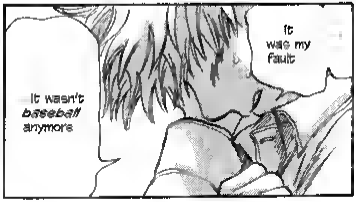
He won't go back.
Tell them that clearly!

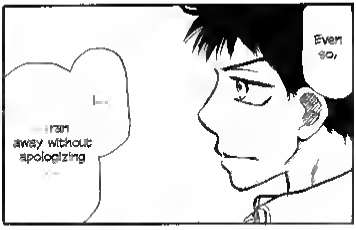
won't
...go back.
I-
PLEASE TELL THEM!
WHY?!
that you threw aside?!
Are you telling me to pick up the ace position
...
I didn't throw it...
...aside!
I-
!!
We lost today and everyone finally acknowledges your strength!
And I finally proved what I was saying!
K-
Kanou-kun!

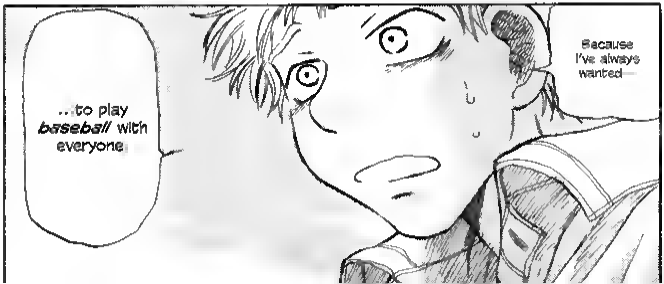
The one who messed that up
...and ruined everyone's middle school years
MIHOSHI
wa-
was me, wasn't it?!

The ace of Mihoshi...
...was always
Kanou-kun.

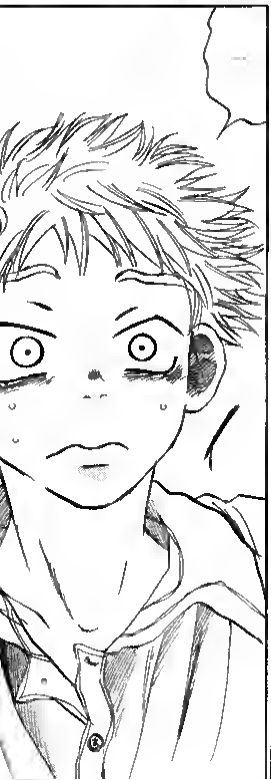
But...
I'm glad I came today!


It was my fault
It wasn't baseball anymore


Even so,
I... ran away without apologizing


Because I've always wanted...
...to play baseball with everyone

I've always wanted
...to play like we did today
MIHOSHI
MIHOSHI
MIHOSHI



We played baseball
but as enemies!

Hey!
I mean,
even though we were always together,

he even transferred schools.
Won't you be lonely by yourself?

No,
!
I won't!

That's true
He's already started on that team

...If you say it like that,
I'm the one who will be lonely...

It's already started as a different team than it was in middle school
We've had people come in, too
MIHOSHI

You'll be the center of that.
so you don't have to hide in Mihashi's shadow anymore!
!!
I-
I never said that!
H-Hey, K-sawa
AH-!
You're saying it. Stupid
I-
let's play again!
No
please
Do it properly
let's
OK!
got it?
Definitely

Miha-chi,
Ah...
Oh, yeah
your habit when you throw a fastball came out
Eh?!
And...
I'll just say this
Fix the other ones, too.
You do it when you panic
OK!
Ah
He told him.
How can you say that when we lost?!
Thought it was obvious
daze
I hit a home run after all
BANG
Even if we lost the game,
Kamou's a better pitcher

Sensei! I'm hungry!
ARE WE GOING TO THE MOUNTAINS TODAY, TOO?
THUNK
THUNK
CREAK
Mihashi's?
pan
It's only 2!
Done.
And I'm
I missed this place!
WB
What's wrong?
Ah, no, it's just
Did he pop a blister?
Gasp
What are you doing?
Ah!

SMILE
Did he fall asleep?
SUDDENLY
Um.
Is it all right if we let him sleep?
It seems he hasn't been sleeping lately
Zzzzz
Let him sleep on the futon so he won't catch a cold
Ah, OK
HE'S IN A WEIRD POSE AGAIN?
But
Zzzzz
He didn't wake up
Smile
One, two
DANCE
rustle
rustle
ROLL

thunk
thunk
You three, you've got one more job to do
Ok.

You gave him this peace of mind, Abe-kun
Huh?

Isn't it great...
...to be trusted?

It means that you're trusted by Mihashi-kun

Just as much as the catcher trusts the pitcher back.
The pitcher will trust the catcher

...It's not a one-way street

...from the catcher

I'LL DEFINITELY MAKE YOU GLAD...
It's your last breakfast here! Let's go stock up on meat!
I'll...
...make you in three years
...YOU CHOSE NISHIMURA!

Asa Higuchi

Ookiku Furikabutte

en·tro·py
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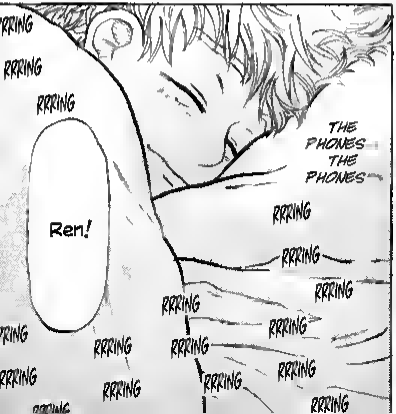
Scans: totochan
Edits: Lighter & Jlindgren
QC: riseabove77

NICE PITCHING!
WE DID IT, MIHASHI!

IT'S A CELEBRATION!
A CELEBRATION WITH PHONES!
WE WON! WE DID IT, WE DID IT!


RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
THE PHONES THE PHONES
Ren!
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING

Ren!
THERE ARE A LOT OF PHONES
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING

WAKE UP!
REN!
RRRING
RRRING
RRRING

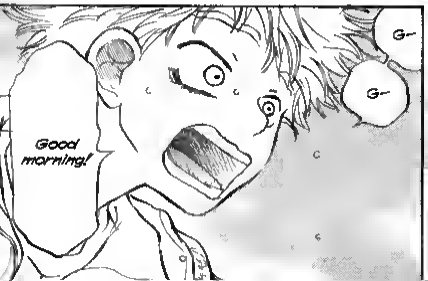
Mother,
my under-shirts!
IT'S ALREADY 7!
DON'T YOU HAVE PRACTICE IN THE MORNING?
AHHH!
Where are my under-shirts?!
The ones with half-sleeves!
Ah, jeez!
Hot!
PAT
PAT
It was so much more relaxed when Ren was committing from his grandpa's place!
I'm not angry or anything
That's AMAZING bedhead you have ...
But being together is better!
SQUEEZE
I'm sorry ...
Urgh ...
Mother
...the half-sleeves ...

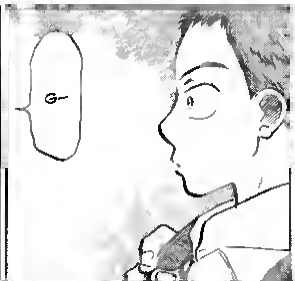
The weather's great today—
22 - 6
40
I'll get your half-sleeves!
Wh—
What about breakfast?
You can have onigiri in the car!
I'll give you a ride, but at least go wash your face!
SCREEECH
CLICK
Oh, a Volvo
Looks like I won't be having a vacation for the next three years.
I knew this'd happen but still
sigh
The training camp ended yesterday and practice on the last day of Golden Week, too.
This team—
...Seems pretty interesting—

Ah!
SLAM

I saw him walking and got off without thinking but
I can greet him?
Will he return it?
He won't grimace, will he?

Oh, it's Mihashi.
Huh?
I-


G-
G-
Good morning!


G-

Some-one from the baseball team?
Ah, yes!
Good morning!

SMILE
'Morning!

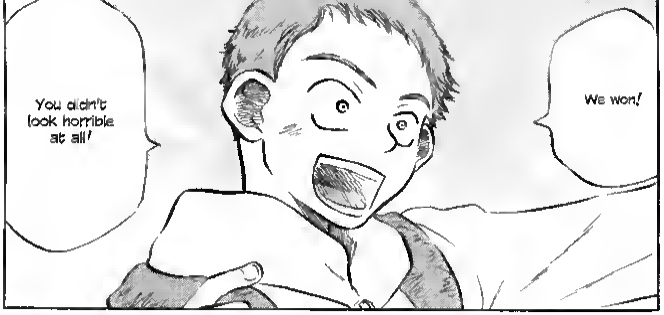
Sakae gu-chi-kun's ...
...a good person!
He can make eye contact now!
FLOOD

Good morning!
Well, I'll be going home now!
OK!

"THOSE ' ON TOP OF HAVING ONIGIRI, HE HAS MEAT BUNS BOUGHT FROM THE CONVENIENCE STORE
Ren, you have two of those,
so give one to your friend!

Is your house near here, Mihashi?
Bopaa!
Baaaa phee
It's fine
You can have both of them
He-
H-
Uu
steam
steam
He's got an unexpectedly large appetite
Maybe he's a growing boy?
bite
-person!
He's a-
good
Um
If I went
Eh
to
the high school from my relative's house, it'd probably be boarding.
Oh?
Is that an education policy?
Y-
yes
GULP
Why?
take it slowly
It's OK,
CHOMP
CHOMP
Wow!
Was your middle school a boarding school?
Mihoshi Academy's in Gunma!

No.
there's a girl there.
Our age
What?
Eh...
...is she cute?
I see a girl
It'd be bad if you were with her all the way to high school...
Wow
I-
I'm so-
Ah,
shock
no, no!
Well,
when I went to Minoshi, I didn't tell her I was going...
and
...she got really mad
over the phone
Ah, so she wanted to cheer for you
She'll get mad
Hellco
That's not related to this at all...
I-
I look...
...horrible...
...when...
I'm pitching,
so I didn't want her to see...
Why?!


You didn't look horrible at all!
We won!

Sakaeguchi-kun, in middle school, were you in the senior league...?
Yeah. I was on a weak team, though

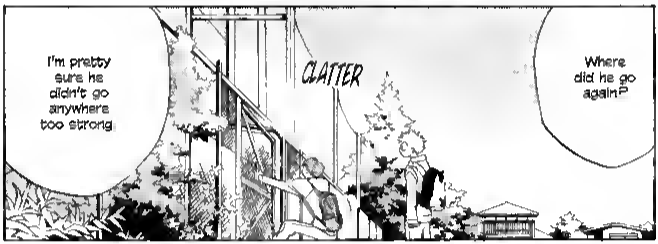
Hee

Sakaeguchi-kun, you looked cool, too
It's fine. You don't have to compliment me back.

Abe was the strongest in the area.
By the way, us two lived in different areas.
and he was one year older.

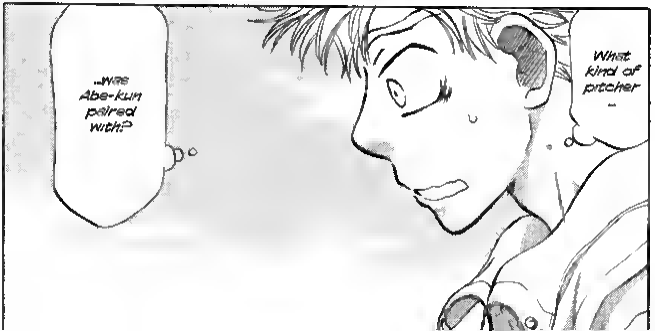
Along with Abe-kun...?
I was with Abe in middle school
Senior League was something else

There was an amazing pitcher!
BA-BUMP
An amazing...
...pitcher?


Where did he go again?
CLATTER
I'm pretty sure he didn't go anywhere too strong

Abe was paired up with him in a battery starting his second year.
Once, they made it to the best 16 in Eastern Japan.
so I was sure they'd go to the same high school

When there's free time, they have ground maintenance



WHAT KIND OF PITCHER IS AN AMAZING PITCHER?!
Good morning!
Now, starting today, we'll have your before-practice meditation!
Medi-
tation!?
Yes.
Well, you can't really call it medi-tation, but...
In short,
we're going to practice giving off our a-waves!

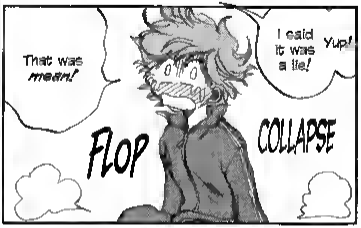
BRAINWAVES CAN BE SAID TO BE A MEASUREMENT OF THE VOLTAGE THAT LEAKS OUT OF YOUR SCALP.
THOSE FREQUENCIES ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, SPLIT INTO FIVE PARTS: γ, β, α, θ, AND δ.
Have you heard of α-waves before?
Alpha—?
A—
Yes!
It's one of your brainwaves!
right—?
the brain's
I have but
like when you're listening to some music you like or something—?
When you're lounging around your room
Now then, when do you think this α-wave appears?
One of these is the α-wave
!!!
SHINOOKA, DON'T MOVE!
You mean like relaxing?
Yup, yup!
Um

EEEEEE!!
THERE'S A SNAKE BY YOUR FEET!

HUH?!
Just now, Shinooka let out an amazing amount of α-waves

It won't come out anymore
AAAGH!
What was that?!

I was lying
Oh, shaky voice
The snake—?
Sen-sei
S-
It's not there?!


That was *mean!*
I said it was a lie!
Yup!
FLOP
COLLAPSE

Then, what is relaxing?
Conceptualizing α- waves with relaxing isn't incorrect
Nishihiro, you said it was relaxing, right?

That's what's written in the dictionary
Relaxing means not using any strength, right?
What's... relaxing...?

IN FACT, SHE WAS USING IT!
SHE WASN'T NOT USING STRENGTH!
That wasn't relaxing, right?

Was Shinooka not using any strength just then?
Then...
That's right
Wow!
Stop it!
That's amazing!
CLAP
CLAP

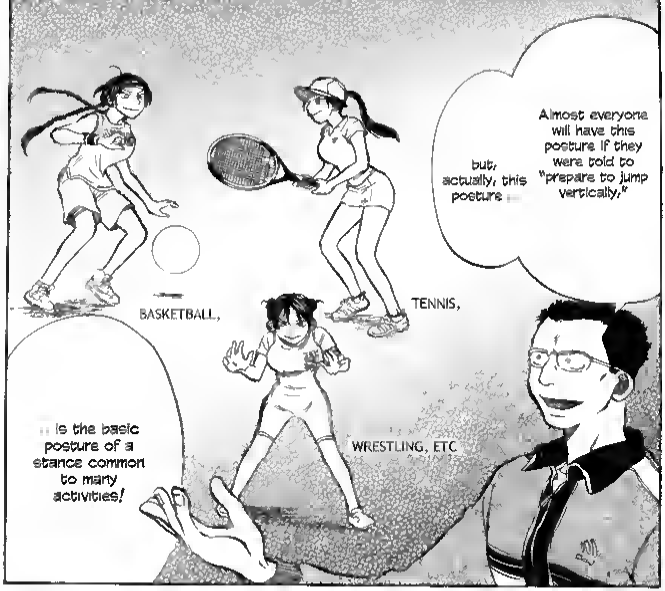
Have you ever thought of this when you were nervous?
Wha—?

"I have to stop using strength and relax!"

Then she didn't give off α-waves —?
No,
I think she gave off α-waves

That's a good view!
POINT
Did you do it?
nod
That's normal
I've thought of it
I didn't
nod
Once, when I tried to not use it, I used too little,
and ended up being all limp
"Not using strength" doesn't mean to "be limp."
It means to "not use any excessive strength."
Even if you say "not using" strength, there's no person who lies down before a starting line of a 100m race
Why?
Because *adjusting strength in and of itself requires power!*
GRIP
However, when you're tense, you can't reach that level well.

Hmm, if I had to say,
probably
So, which strength?
The ability to control the amount of strength?
of the heart,
SQUEAK
Yup yup!
She was leaning forward and loosely bending her knees,
and she was lightly clenching her hands near her body
Do you remember what Shinooka looked like when she screamed just now?
UGH
All right, don't back away! don't back away!
Like this?
Um, like this
Yeah
Ah, he's right.
...you think it looks like a defensive stance?
Don't

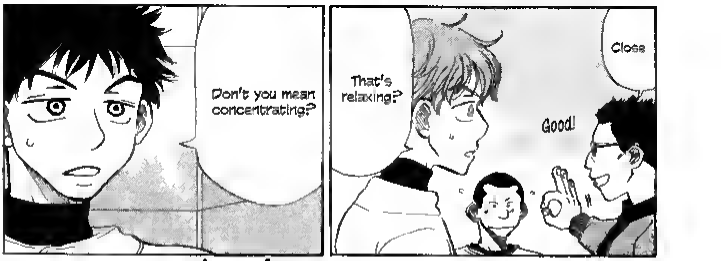

Almost everyone will have this posture if they were told to "prepare to jump vertically."
but, actually, this posture
BASKETBALL,
TENNIS,
WRESTLING, ETC.
...is the basic posture of a stance common to many activities!

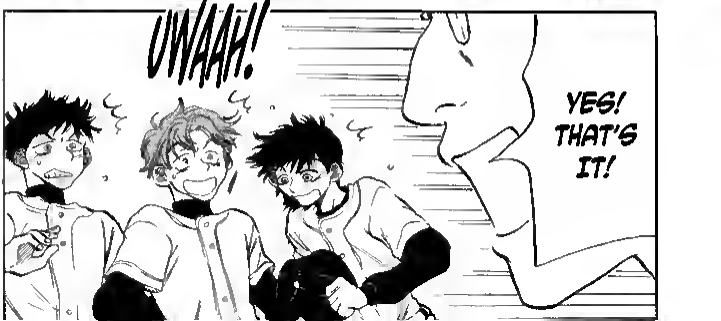
Yes!
Hanai's pretty good at conjecturing!
Gr...
Now, then.

I see.
You mean your body takes the best appearing posture if you're not thinking too much

If you only look at the stance when you're, for example, suddenly warned and you're so nervous you freeze solid,
It's not different from Shintooka's stance just now

The "not using any strength of the heart" you're talking about, Sensei,
do you mean getting rid of extra things in your head such as pressure?
α-waves
Tense
However, it's said that α-waves don't appear when your body's frozen solid.
What was different about Shinooka?
POINT
Bingo!
Shinooka wasn't under any pressure!
It was— being in the situation where you can't miss!

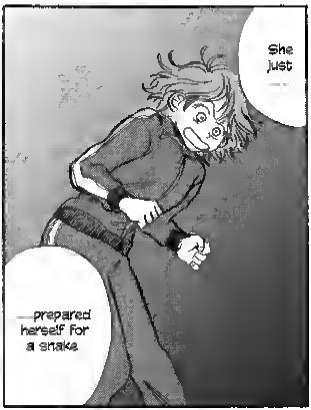

Don't you mean concentrating?
That's relaxing?
Close
Good!


UWAAH!
YES! THAT'S IT!

"RELAX-ING" AND "CONCEN-TRATING"
ARE ONE AND THE SAME!!
Wha—?
THEN WHAT IS CONCEN-TRATING?!
Just how many steps are you going to make us go through?!
Shi-nooka
Yes?
!
If you'd really heard a RUSTLE by your feet, what would you've done?
Eh?
Would you've jumped up or started running?
Um,
I've never thought about it,
but...
That's
concentra-tion
PAT
Wha—?!

Shinooka
wasn't thinking and she got into a posture where she could run away easily
She wasn't thinking about how she could run away
She probably ignored the current situation and what everyone around her thought of her

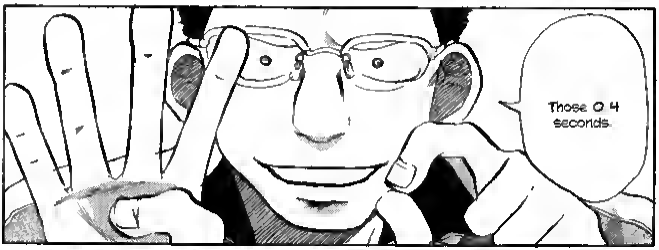
Just preparing oneself
Even after something happened, don't think about anything else and let only the body react
PAT
PAT


She just
—prepared herself for a snake

That
—is an amazing level of concentration!

"I wasn't thinking anything," or "I don't remember what happened during the event."
W-
World records
If you don't think about anything, you can't play baseball...
...That seems a bit extreme
When people who have broken world records are interviewed,
there are some who answer
I understand it a bit, though...
I'm not telling you to "concentrate" for the entire two hours of the baseball game
You can't keep up such a strong concentration when you're not thinking of anything
Listen up
The mechanisms of concentration of those who break world records...
...and your concentration are the same!

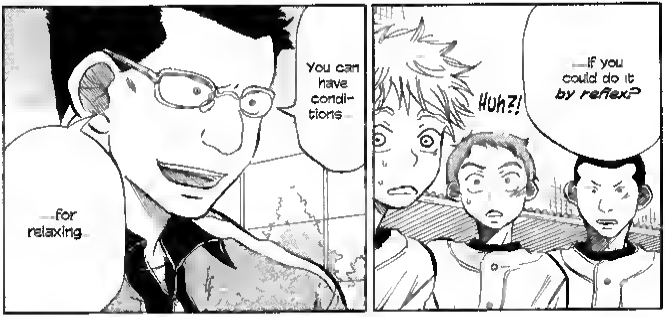
Oh?
For example, when you're up at bat, what's important
is the time from when the pitcher throws the ball to when the catcher catches it
I'm talking
...over a much, much shorter period of time.
GRIP


Those 0.4 seconds.

Well, yeah.
When *Oh, he pitched*, is floating through your head, the ball's already hit the mitt.
You can't hit it if you think.
Y-you mean over a period of time like that?
When people think, they always use words.

Yes!
There's not enough time during batting for thinking!
TAP
Therefore, ideally,
you have to completely finish confirming the plays you must use your head for before you enter the batter's box
Once you enter the batter's box, you raise your concentration to the level where you're not thinking about anything
— and just prepare for the pitcher's throw— is what I'm saying.
For example,
It's the bottom of the ninth inning, two outs,
and you're their last hope, standing in the batter's box.
BA-BUMP
Stand in the box while forgetting the situation and "relax."
Grin
Do you guys understand that?

That's impossible.
Whoa.
I get nervous just thinking about it.
What...
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP


—If you could do it by reflex?
HUH?!
You can have conditions—
—for relaxing.

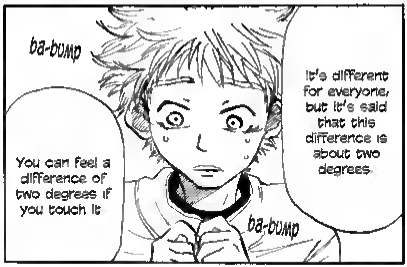
Have conditions?
You mean...
Then, w—
we should relax when we see the ball.
Something like that?
WHAT?
When you see dried plum you salivate.
Something like that.

Then we shouldn't be nervous during a game?!
YOU SERI-OUS ?!
nod
That's right!
It's probably a lie, but that'd be awesome if it were true!
So, first, we have to re-member what it feels like to give off α-waves
You're not just running away from a snake. You have to make your body remember a lot of things
Even if I say so, you can't do this today or tomorrow
It went to the beginning
It connected.
Wow...
That's why we're meditating!

More like I've never thought about it
Not at all
But, you don't know when you release it

Now, then, everyone releases α-waves every day

ba-bump
An easy way to tell whether you're relaxed or not is through the temperature of your hands
Your palm becomes cold when you're tense and becomes hot when you're relaxed
touch


ba-bump
It's different for everyone, but it's said that this difference is about two degrees
You can feel a difference of two degrees if you touch it
ba-bump

Concentrate your consciousness on a part of your body—for example, your palm—and imagine that it's getting warmer
Actually, you can think of it as releasing α-waves if the temperature rises

What we're going to do now is called a bodily sensation meditation

Try feeling the various temperatures of the hands of the people next to you
Let's get in a circle
and sit down
Link hands with the person next to you
TOUCH
Try imagining your blood flowing from your heart to the tips of your fingers.
It's gotten cold again
If your hand becomes hotter than that of the person next to you,
Now, close your eyes.
Ready ?
split your own body temperature with the other

Keep your breaths as deep as possible
Deep breaths are to help release the tension of the muscles
If yours is colder,
then imagine taking heat from the other
When you're breathing, you invigorate your auxiliary sympathetic nerves
Auxiliary ?
Oh,
let's save that for next time...
Make your breathing uniform
Breathe in,
INHALE
hold it for a bit,

EXHALE
and slowly breathe out.
...
Breathe in.
digest what you had for breakfast.
hold it for a bit.
imagine burning the air you inhaled and turning it into your body temperature.
and slowly breathe out...
CHIRP CHIRP
peep peep peep
Split your risen body temperature with your neighbor.
and those taking take all they want.

We've ...
...become a team...
...Breathe in...
...breathe out...
Breathe in.
breathe out.

glance

Just five minute's enough!
Already?
That was fast
If you do too much, you'll fall asleep!
CLAP
OK, THAT'S ALL!
blink
blink

NOW, LET'S ALL GET CHARGED UP!
WE'RE LIMITED ON HOW MUCH TIME WE CAN BAT!

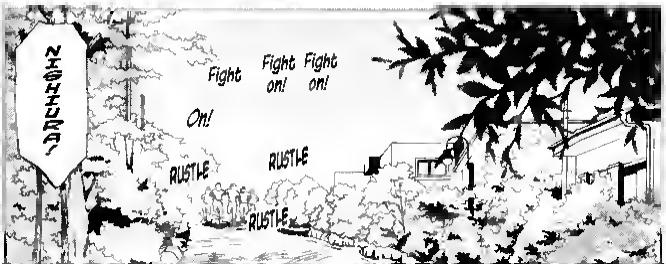
Mikami's hand
PAT
PAT
stayed cold

We'll have long-distance batting practice for warmup until the other clubs start.
and then we'll go watch a big prefecture-wide game today.
OK!
...

" Isn't it great to be trusted by

he's a pitcher
I never thought it'd be easy!

Well


NISHIURA!
Fight
Fight on!
Fight on!
On!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

NIGHIURA!
FIGH-
FIGH-
FIGH-
FIGH-
FIGH-
ON!
ON!
ON!
ON!
RUSTLE
FIGHT!!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
ON!
FIGHT!!
ON!
FIGH-
ON!
FIGH-
ON!
FIGH-
ON!
ON!
RUSTLE
YOU'LL BREAK THE RHYTHM!
YOU'RE QUIET!
NI-
SHIU-
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

FIGH-
ON!
Wow, they're fast!
They were out-read!
RUSTLE
FIGH-
ON!
RUSTLE
Clink
Clink
FIGH-
FIGH-
ON!
RUSTLE
NISHI- NI-
URAAAA!!

OH! OH!
we're finally here!
-w-
DON DON DON DODODODO
Ah, Mihashi's
glance
glance
Where's the entrance?
This is going to make us tougher
COLLAPSE

Musashino first!
!
Who versus whom?
Hm, it's Urawa Integrated and
Chiyo-chan, buy admission tickets for us.
Whisper
Why go to such a strange game
If they win this, they'll be in the quarterfinals.
What game is this?
You get what I'm saying right?
This game is more worth seeing than the championship
Thank you!
Yes.
It's the finals, and...
Oh
Strange?
can't be an objective
There are times when an objective too large

OH, THEY'RE PLAYING!
So, a game to reach the quarterfinals is strange, is it?
Interesting...
...
DON DON DON DODODODO DON DON
YES!
KURAWA!
Let's go sit behind the third base line!
Yeah
The only cheerers are the ones on the Urawa side
It's a worthless effort though as it got nothing to do with us!
URA-INTEGRATED!
URA-INTEGRATED!
URA-INTEGRATED!
PON
PON

FLAP
...PRACTICING ALL DAY,
FLAP
I MEAN, WE'VE BEEN...
I'M GONNA GO TANNING!
SLIP
AND WE HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO TAN!
PLOP
SPARK
you can't do that!
Ack!
Tai ma-kun.
TAKE OFF
I wonder if a penis can get tanned?
Which side's stronger?
You're not gonna tan?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

Musashino's better at soccer than baseball
Urawa goes to Koshien, so they're always strong
Maybe Urawa—

No way
Eck!
BA-BUMP
N-no way! We didn't say anything to get him mad, right?
It doesn't look like the people on their baseball team are popular!
Oh? There's all types in the world
There was a girl who wanted to cheer for their soccer team, so she went to Mushashino!
Yeah that's right!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
Ah, over there
This is bad
Did he hear?

I-
I did?!
H-
Hanai said it! He said Urawa was stronger!
No, seriously ?!
JUMP
CLATTER
Huh?
What ?
EEEK!
TAKAYA!
TAKAYA!

Takaya!!
TAKAYA! COME HERE FOR A BIT!
Who?
Takaya-san?
Takaya-saaaan.
someone's calling you!
Um
Abe-kun
Yeah?
That person's calling you.
Takaya, damn you, I'm telling you to get over here!
!
!
Damn
Abe-kun's called Takaya.
bap
bap
I know. I am the Manager.
Nice, you knew his name.

Huh?
It was Haruna-san.

the amazing pitcher!
The person I was talking about this morning
You know, the one who was grouped with Abe in the senior league.

Hey
Someone he knows?
Who?
MURMUR MURMUR
So Abe's Takaya?

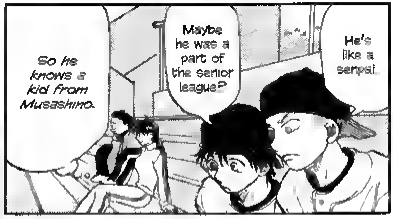
The team started last year. They applied to the Japan High School Baseball Federation the following year so they can participate in formal games

Wait!
What did you come to talk about?!
This is just before a game!
We haven't warmed up yet
Just shut up
I'm starting in the fourth inning, so it's fine!
Haruna!
This is a formal game!
Think about the third-years and be serious!
I get it!
I was just joking
Hey,
stay after the game

You
spent half a year learning to catch my pitches properly
Hmph
What's with that manner of speaking?!
CLATTER
I'm here on a group activity
I get it already!
Haruna!
Well,
you got good at it in the last half.
...
You were covered in bruises.
but you can't catch them anymore now.
I remember we lost a game because of your passed ball

M
Watch closely.

Was that Haruna-san?
Yeah
He's gotten bigger


So he knows a kid from Musashino.
Maybe he was a part of the senior league?
He's like a senpai.

He didn't want to watch this game...
...even though it's the quarter-final series?

Definitely not
!
Why not?
Haruna-san was an amazing pitcher!
This morning, I told Mihashi
Yeah
I thought that Abe would go to the same school as Haruna-san.

He's...
. the worst pitcher...

アフタヌーンKC—353

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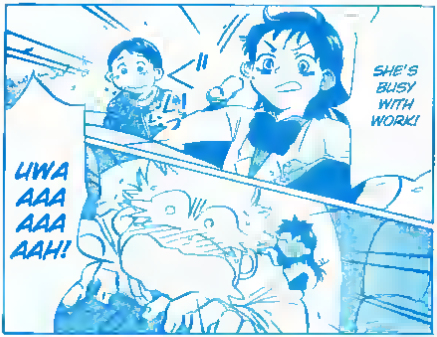
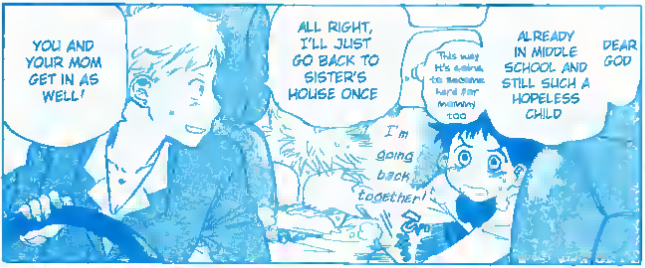
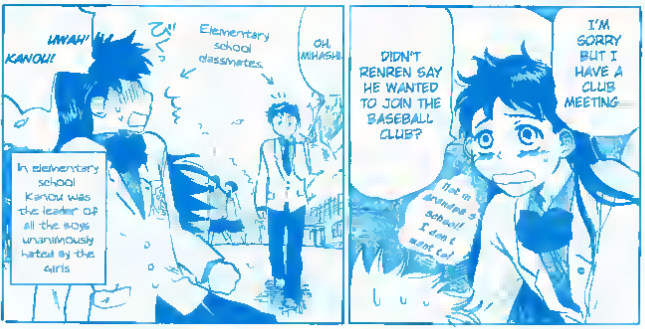

UWA AAA AAA AAH!
SHE'S BUSY WITH WORK!
RENREN!
AUNTIE HAS TO GO BACK TO SAITAMA ALREADY!
HOME
This is a funny place for an inn, isn't it?
Mihashi Academy middle school division opening ceremony


YOU AND YOUR MOM GET IN AS WELL!
ALL RIGHT, I'LL JUST GO BACK TO SISTER'S HOUSE ONCE
This way it's easier to socialize, hard for mommy too
I'm going back together!
ALREADY IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND STILL SUCH A HOPELESS CHILD
DEAR GOD


UWAH!
KANOU!
Elementary school classmates
OH, MIHASHI
In elementary school Kanou was the leader of all the boys unanimously hated by the girls
DIDN'T RENREN SAY HE WANTED TO JOIN THE BASEBALL CLUB?
That is definitely a setback! I don't want that
I'M SORRY BUT I HAVE A CLUB MEETING

裏面へ続く

REN'S HERE?
AH!
YOU USED TO PLAY CATCH TOGETHER EVERY TIME YOU CAME TO VISIT US!
LOOK, REN! SHUU-CHAN HAS ENROLLED IN MIHOSHI TOO!
AH IT'S SHUU-CHAN!
Neighbours
They're gonna ask about our positions first. What're you gonna say?
Err
SHUU-CHAN
AH
HEY, REN!
COME ON, LET'S GO TO THE BASEBALL CLUB!
HEH
No way! For real?
Me too!
Hm...
I'm a pitcher
With this the Mihoshi are is (for the time being?) complete!
Raise
This break is mine!
"...THAT'S HOW IT WAS.